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ART. VIII.—1. *A Sketch of the British Fur Trade in North America; with Observations relative to the North-West Company of Montreal.* 8vo. By the Earl of Selkirk. London: 1816.

2. *Voyage de la Mer Atlantique à l'Océan Pacifique par le Nord-ouest dans la Mer Glaciale; par le Capitaine Laurent Ferrer Maldonado, l'an* 1588. *Nouvellement traduit d'un Manuscrit Espagnol, et suivi d'un Discours qui en démontre l'Autenticité et la Véracité, par Charles Amoretti. Plaisance: de l'Imprimerie del Majno.* 1812.

NO one will doubt that Lord Selkirk is an amiable, honourable, and intelligent man—but he has the misfortune to be a protector. We are persuaded, however, that his are not the deep-laid schemes of a sordid narrow-minded calculator, but the suggestions of an ardent imagination and a benevolent heart—such as are apt sometimes to overlook difficulties which it is not easy to overleap.

It will be remembered that his lordship, some years ago, made an attempt, in part a successful one, to divert the tide of emigration from the Highlands of Scotland to the United States, and turn it to Prince Edward's Island, within the territories of Great Britain. His intentions were, no doubt, benevolent and humane; but, an impulse was supposed to be given to them by the ruling passion of reviving, in North America, that species of feudal system which was finally extinguished in North Britain about 'seventy years since.' His lordship was thought to be ambitious of becoming the head of a clan—the chieftain and founder of numerous families. For such expansive views an island was too confined a sphere: but the neighbouring continent had all the requisites that could possibly be wished—an indefinite extent of territory, abounding in woods and plains, and extensive lakes, and navigable rivers; with a soil capable of affording subsistence for millions, but nearly untenanted, save by the beasts of the forests, claimed as the exclusive property of some trading merchants under the grant of a Royal Charter, who would neither cultivate any part of it themselves, nor suffer others

to do it; he set about devising the means of rescuing some of the best parts of it from so unprofitable a condition. For this purpose, it is said, and we believe truly, his lordship purchased, at a price far beyond its value, about *one-third part* of the stock of the Hudson's Bay Company;—the whole of which is only £100,000. A proprietor to such an extent could not well be refused a favour from the Governors of the Company; and they granted him, what we rather think the Law Officers of the Crown have decided they had no power to grant, a wide extent of country held, or supposed to be held, under their Charter, of which he proceeded to take possession.

'He was called away from England,' he says, 'to a remote part of the British dominions for the purpose, not only of defending his rights of property from threatened infringement, but also to give his personal support to a considerable body of individuals who, in a great degree, looked up to him for protection, and against whom a train of premeditated and violent aggression has been committed by their fellow subjects.'

On his arrival in Canada he found the territory which he was about to settle, and indeed the whole of America from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the Lakes of Canada to the extreme North, overrun by the servants of an Association of Merchants in London and Montreal calling itself the *North-west Company*, between which and the Hudson's Bay Company there had long subsisted a deadly feud. At Montreal, we presume, he writes his 'Sketch of the Fur Trade,' which is well calculated to bring down public indignation on the heads of those who conduct, or who are concerned in it. The pains that appear to be taken, and the plans that are laid, to seduce the inoffensive savages into habits of vice, in order that the 'traders' may the more easily exercise a brutal tyranny over them; and the ferocious and unfeeling conduct of the Canadian rivals in the fur trade towards each other, setting at defiance all religion, morality and law, are stated in such terms and on such evidence, that they are not only 'deserving the early attention of the public,' but will command it, and, we doubt not, call forth the immediate interference of the legislature.

It would seem, however, that Lord Selkirk has not thought fit to await the decision of the legislature or the executive government. The details of the extraordinary and atrocious transactions which have urged his lordship to the strange steps he has taken are not yet fairly before the public. Private letters, however, from interested individuals say, that Mr. Semple, recently appointed Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, while on a journey to inspect its forts and establishments in the 'Indian territories,' fell in with a party of natives carrying provisions to some of the trading establishments of the North-

North-west Company; that Mr. Semple, through a mistaken zeal for the interests of his employers, hesitated to let them pass; that a scuffle ensued, in which the unfortunate governor and about twenty of his people were put to death. Mr. Semple could scarcely have denied the right of a passage to the natives through their own territories. The account given in the Montreal Herald of the 12th October, evidently from one of the few persons who survived the massacre, is probably the true one. From this it appears, that a regular expedition was fitted out by the North-west Company, to drive away, for the second time, the people belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company, who had re-possessed themselves of their establishment on the Red-river. Mr. Semple, observing their approach from the fort, said 'We must go and meet those people—let twenty men follow me.' They had only proceeded a few hundred yards, when several colonists came running towards them in great dismay, crying out, 'The North-west Company—the "half breeds!"' Having advanced about half a mile from Fort Douglas, a numerous body of cavalry appeared from behind a wood, and surrounded the Governor and his people, when one Bouché, a Canadian, rode up to Mr. Semple, demanding their 'fort.' The Governor answered, 'Go to your fort.' 'You,' retorted Bouché, 'have destroyed our fort, you damned rascal.' 'Scoundrel,' said Semple, laying his hand upon Bouché's bridle, 'dare you call me so?' Bouché sprang from his horse, and a shot was immediately fired, by which Lieut. Holt fell. The next shot wounded the Governor, who called out to his men, 'Do what you can to take care of yourselves;' but he was so much beloved that they affectionately gathered round him to learn what injury he had suffered; when a volley of musketry was poured into the group, which killed several and wounded the greater part of them.

'The cavalry galloped towards the survivors, who took off their hats and called for mercy. But this address for mercy was made to the servants of the North-west Company, and at their hands was immediately received by what must be presumed the accustomed measure of their compassion—a speedy termination of earthly calamities. The knife, the axe, or the ball, in able and willing hands, soon placed in lasting repose, those whom pain or terror had rendered clamorous. One only was spared, through the exertions of a Canadian to whom he had been intimately known—two others were providentially saved by escaping to a canoe, and two more, by swimming, in the tumult, to the other side of the river.'

Thus fell Governor Semple, a man of amiable and modest manners, and of a most humane and benevolent disposition,—his private secretary, the surgeon, two officers, and fifteen settlers. Their bodies are stated to have been barbarously mangled to gratify the savage rancour of their murderers, commanded by a Mr. Cuthbert

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Grant, who told the survivor, if the remainder in the fort shewed the least resistance, 'neither man, woman, nor child, should be saved.' The distress and horror of those who had been left in the fort, and of others who had fled thither for safety, is thus described by the prisoner sent to summon it:

'The wives, children, and relatives of the slain, were there collected, mourning for the dead, despairing for the living, and in agonies of horror, such as can be expressed in no language, nor even imagined, but by the minds of those on whom the Almighty may have permitted an equal visitation.'

The writer further states, that death was not the worst they had to dread, as one M'Donald had encouraged his people, by promising them, in addition to the plunder they had to expect, the wives and daughters of the settlers, for the gratification of their brutal desires.

When the account of this horrid transaction reached Montreal, Lord Selkirk, it seems, determined at once to secure the culprits or their employers, and for this purpose proceeded up the country, taking with him a considerable number of people, consisting chiefly of disbanded men from Meuron's regiment; marched them, as his enemies say, directly against Fort William, (the principal post of the North-west Company on Lake Superior,) and, having summoned the garrison in a true military style, which is said to have surrendered at discretion, sent the whole of the *North-westers*, including the Mac Gillivrays, the Mac Leods, Mac Kenzies, Frazers, and many other

'Scottish northern chiefs
Of high and warlike name,'

as prisoners of war to Montreal, where they were released from their parole, or, in other words, admitted to bail.

His lordship's friends, however, say that he took possession by the more peaceable process of a warrant issued by himself in his capacity of magistrate. Indeed we hardly can persuade ourselves that Lord Selkirk would venture to exercise, under any authority, such a stretch of power as is here imputed to him; at least his avowed political principles lead us to think otherwise. But we hasten to his pamphlet, which fully prepares us—not only for transactions like that just mentioned, but—for almost any species of outrage and aggression.

When Canada was a province of France, the fur trade was carried on under a system of exclusive privileges. The governor granted licenses to individuals to trade with the Indians, within certain prescribed limits; the persons who obtained these privileges being generally officers of the army or others of respectable family-connexion; and this system, Lord Selkirk observes, established and extended

extended the political influence of the French government in its transactions with the Indian nations of America. The privileged traders were generally men of education, and it was their interest, as well as duty, to promote the general objects expected from them; knowing that, on failure, their exclusive rights would be withdrawn. Their conduct besides was closely watched by the missionaries, whose attention was particularly directed to the prevention of abuses arising from the sale of spirituous liquors among the savages. This system had the best effect in improving the character and increasing the comforts of the natives; 'as a proof of which,' says Lord Selkirk, 'we need only compare the present state of the Indians in Canada, with that in which they stood immediately after the conquest of that province by Great Britain, at which period populous villages existed in many districts where, at present, we meet only two or three wandering families, and these addicted to the most brutal excesses, and a prey to want and misery.'

This system of traffic, however, being inconsistent with the received principles of 'freedom of trade' under the English government, was speedily abolished, and the trade thrown open; the first adventurers made large profits; and this encouraged others to embark in the same concern; a keen commercial competition arose, which, if confined to *innocent* barter, might have been advantageous to the Indians by supplying them with better goods on more reasonable terms: but it was soon discovered that, of all the goods offered for sale, a profuse supply of spirituous liquors was the shortest and most ready mode of obtaining a preference in the market. The propensity of the Indians to intoxication was fostered by unbounded temptation; and disorders of all kinds were the result: the rival traders, scattered over a country of immense extent, and removed to a distance from all civil authority, believed, and were confirmed in the belief, that the commission of almost every crime would pass with impunity. 'Every art,' says Lord Selkirk, 'which malice could devise, was exerted without restraint, and the intercourse of the traders with each other partook more of the style of the savages by whom they were surrounded, than of the country from which they had sprung.' His lordship quotes Mr. Henry and Sir Alexander M'Kenzie to prove the reciprocal hostility of the traders,—'each pursuing his own interests in such a manner as might most injure his neighbour,'—and the baneful effects of such conduct on the morals of the Indians. The agents principally employed in the distant parts of the country were French Canadians, known by the name of *Coureurs des bois*, a set of men who, by accompanying the natives on their hunting and trading excursions, had become so attached to the Indian mode of life, that they had lost all relish for their former habits and native homes. The missionaries com-

plained of the licentious manners of these men, whom they represented as a disgrace to the Christian religion; while the Indians, losing all respect for them, laid them under frequent contributions: the merchants who had embarked in the trade were disgusted with their ill success, and refused to continue their advances. Sir Alexander states, that in the year 1780, as some of these traders were about to depart from the Eagle Hills, where a large band of Indians were engaged in drinking near their houses, a Canadian, 'to ease himself of the troublesome importunities of a native, gave him a dose of laudanum in a glass of grog, which effectually prevented him from giving further trouble to any one, by setting him asleep for ever.' The consequence of this was a frav, in which one of the traders and several of the men were killed, and the rest saved themselves by flight. About the same time two of the establishments on the Assineboin River were attacked, when several white men and a greater number of Indians were killed. In short, it appeared that the natives had come to the resolution of extirpating the traders, and that they were only saved from their indignation by the ravages of the smallpox, which, at this moment, spread among the Indians like a pestilence, and almost depopulated the country. By this calamity the traders, though rescued from personal danger, found the source of their profits cut off; no furs were brought to them; and those natives who had escaped the contagion, fled their approach, and hunted only for their own subsistence.

In this forlorn situation of the fur trade, the merchants of Canada thought it best to form an association under the name of the *North-west Company*, and throw their separate capitals into one common stock; but a few individuals, not satisfied with the arrangement, continued to carry on a separate trade. This retarded a general union, which, when effected, was again dissolved; in 1798 a great secession from the North-west Company took place, and a new one was formed, known by the name of the X. Y. Company. A coalition, however, was at length effected between these rival bodies in the year 1805, at which time the North-west Company took its present form and character—a character so curious, that we shall briefly describe it from Lord Selkirk's pages.

The whole concern is divided into a hundred shares; seventy-five of which belong to the Old, and twenty-five to the New Company; of the former, thirty are held by one house at Montreal; of the latter, eighteen or nineteen are appropriated to different houses in Montreal and London; the remaining shares are held by individuals, who are termed *wintering partners*, and who take upon themselves the charge of managing the affairs of the Company in the interior. These partners hold a general meeting every summer at the rendez-

vous

vous of Fort William, at the Grand Portage, on Lake Superior; where all matters are decided by a majority of votes, each share giving a vote, and absentees voting by proxy. After a certain period of service, a wintering partner is permitted to retire with considerable allowances; the vacancy is filled by the election of a clerk, who must have served a certain number of years, under the direction of the wintering partners, in the management of one or more trading posts in the interior; the choice, as may be supposed, generally falls on one who possesses the qualifications most requisite for promoting the common interest; he must be well acquainted with the nature of the trade, the character and manners of the Indians, and the mode of acquiring influence among them. The hope of obtaining the envied situation of a *partner*, excites among the senior clerks an activity and zeal for the general interests of the concern, hardly inferior to that of the partners themselves; who, on their part, watch closely the conduct of the clerks under their immediate command, not only from regard to the common interest, in which they participate, but also from feelings of personal responsibility; as the praise or censure of his associates is dealt out to each partner according to the success or failure of his management, and the profit or loss on his ledger.

This system, Lord Selkirk observes, is admirably calculated to infuse activity into every department; and to direct that activity, in the most effectual manner, and with complete unity of purpose, towards the common interest; but is by no means calculated to produce much respect for the rights of others: on the contrary, he adds, 'the very nature of the association and the extensive range which their operations embrace, cannot fail to produce an *esprit de corps* not very consistent with the feelings of propriety and justice;' and this observation is particularly applicable to the wintering partners. Secluded from all society, except that of persons who have the same interests with himself, the necessity of maintaining a fair character in the estimation of the public, which, in the common intercourse of civilized society, operates as a check on the inordinate stimulus of self-interest, has no influence with him; he is solicitous only for the approbation of those who are not likely to judge his excesses with extreme rigour. He knows too that in these remote regions, the restraints of law cannot operate; and that it must be a case of very extraordinary importance which would induce a plaintiff to travel thousands of miles to find the court from which he is to seek redress. It cannot, therefore, excite much surprize if, under such circumstances, acts of injustice and oppression are committed against weaker neighbours. His lordship concludes by asking—'if acts of illegal violence are allowed to pass without any mark of reprobation; and still more, if promotion is given to those

who have been guilty of them, whether it can be doubted that there exists a regular, concentrated plan of systematic oppression, carried on with the consent and approbation of those who have the chief active direction of the affairs of the Company?'

To prove that such a *systematic* plan does exist, he proceeds to point out the conduct of the Company, with regard, first, to their own servants in the interior—secondly, to the native Indians—and lastly, to private traders.

If the facts stated be true, they are most disgraceful to the parties concerned, and highly discreditable to the national character; if false, we doubt not the gentlemen connected with the North-west Company, in London and Montreal, many of whom are very respectable, will feel it incumbent on them to take immediate steps to wash away the foul stain cast upon them, by the felonious acts of pillage, robbery and murder, which they are seriously charged with having sanctioned and abetted.

It appears from the Journal of Count Adriani, as quoted by the Duc de Liancourt, and from Mr. (now Sir Alexander) M'Kenzie, that the *voyageurs*, or servants employed in the interior by the North-west Company, are men of the most uncontrolled dissipation and licentiousness, and that the Company encourage this conduct; that drunkenness and debauchery are so essential a part of the system, that if any of them evince a disposition to economy and sobriety, they are selected for the most laborious drudgery and subjected to such a train of ill usage as to drive them at length into the general system. Their wages are not paid in hard cash; but the Company take care to supply them with rum, blankets, and trinkets for the Indian women, and no difficulty is made in allowing them credit till they become deeply involved in debt. The servant is then in complete bondage, 'and no alternative left him but absolute submission to his employers, or a gaol. He must, therefore, yield to to every imposition which his superiors think fit to practise upon him'—a trifling imposition, it seems, of not more than three or four hundred per cent. on every article which he takes from them! Besides this, money is reckoned according to the *North-west currency*—every shilling of which is accounted *two* of the ordinary money of the province; so that we cannot greatly wonder that with wages nominally double or treble the annual rate of wages in the province, the servants of the North-west Company should never realize any property. 'So far, indeed,' says Lord Selkirk, 'from saving money, or bettering their condition in this service, there are many of them who leave their families in great distress, and never remit any part of their wages for the support of their wives and children;' and, he adds, 'strangers travelling through Lower Canada must be struck with the frequent appearance of beggarly

beggarly hovels, bespeaking a degree of poverty seldom to be met with in other parts of America;—these habitations are usually occupied by the families of Voyageurs employed in the north-west.'

'The number of Voyageurs in the service of the North-west Company cannot be less than 2,000. Their nominal wages are from 30*l.* to 60*l.*, some as high as 80*l.*, or even 100*l.*—the average cannot be less than 40*l.*, and is probably higher; so that the sum-total of wages must be 80 or 90,000*l.* The gross return of their trade seldom exceeds 150,000*l.*, and when the cost of trading goods, and all the expenses of the concern are taken into consideration, it must be very evident that the Company could never afford, out of this sum, to pay such an amount of wages. To obviate this difficulty their servants receive goods, the real value of which cannot be accurately known without a reference to the books of the Company; but in the opinion of persons of the best general information, the prime cost of the goods so employed cannot exceed 10,000*l.* sterling. From one article a judgment may be formed of the rest—*spirits* are sold to the servants of the Company in the interior, at the rate of eight dollars per quart, which cost the Company little more than one dollar per gallon at Montreal; so that when a servant becomes addicted to drinking spirits (no very uncommon case) it is an easy matter to add 10*l.* or 20*l.* to his nominal wages.'—p. 39, 40.

If such be the treatment of their own servants, that which is experienced by the Indians, it may readily be imagined, is not likely to be of a more just or lenient description. Lord Selkirk says that the instances are numerous of Indians being plundered of their property, and of personal violence being exercised towards them, for no offence but that of having presumed to trade with others, who offered them a better price for their furs; that though this is generally done under some pretence of debt, instances are common of the most brutal and atrocious violence, when no such pretence could be alleged. One of these we shall give.

'In the year 1796 one of the gentlemen of the North-west Company had been killed near Cumberland House, by a particular band of Indians. From the timid character of the Indians in that quarter, and the insults to which they have been in the habit of continually submitting, it is more than probable that they must have been driven to this act of desperation by some extraordinary provocation. However that might be, it was thought of essential consequence to the North-west Company that the act should not pass unpunished. One of the Indians supposed to be guilty was overtaken by a party of the Company's servants, commanded by Mr. M'Kay, the partner in charge of the department, who, taking upon himself the office of executioner, as well as of judge and jury, levelled his gun, and shot the offender dead upon the spot. Another Indian of the same band was taken alive; a sort of mock trial was held, in which three partners of the North-west Company condemned him to death; and he was immediately hanged on a tree in the neighbourhood of the trading-post.'—p. 47.

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It would be a disgusting task, says his lordship, to detail the numerous and continued acts of violence exercised in the most illegal and tyrannical manner against the wretched natives of these districts; who have, in consequence of their connection with the traders, been growing more deficient in every estimable point of character, from the time that Canada fell under the government of Great Britain. The cause of this humiliating fact, Lord Selkirk adds, can no longer be a mystery, when it is known that the management of these people has been left without controul in the hands of men, 'who speculate upon the vices of their servants.'—Nor must the whole blame be thrown on the wintering partners. Their principals in London are accused of having lent themselves to counteract measures which might have tended to reform the habits, and ameliorate the condition of the native Indians. The American government, it is said, by placing an effectual restraint on the sale of spirituous liquors, has succeeded in exciting a spirit of regularity and industry, formerly unknown, among the Indian tribes residing on the waters of the Ohio. When the same measure was proposed to be adopted with regard to the Indians within the British boundaries, the Hudson's Bay Company are stated to have expressed their hearty concurrence in the proposition, as equally beneficial to the native inhabitants, and to the comfort and security of all who resided among them; but the agents and partners of the North-west Company, *in London*, strongly opposed it; and were supported by such influence as made it necessary, at that time, to drop the further prosecution of the measure.

Lord Selkirk proceeds to shew how impossible it is to contend with the North-west Company, whose outrageous acts of violence and injustice long since drove all private competitors out of the trade; and even rendered it necessary for the New Company to form a junction with them. On this occasion Sir A. Mackenzie observes, 'after the severest struggle ever known in that part of the world, and suffering every oppression which a jealous and rival spirit could instigate; after the murder of one of our partners, the laming of another, and the narrow escape of one of our clerks, who received a bullet through his powder-horn in the execution of his duty, they were compelled to allow us a share in the trade.' Once united, however, the two parties, Lord Selkirk observes, were equally desirous of throwing a veil over the atrocities which took place during their quarrel.

We deem it unnecessary to trouble our readers with a long recital of the unjust and atrocious conduct which Lord Selkirk accuses the North-west Company of having held towards their rivals the Hudson's Bay Company. It is stamped with the same character as that of the other two Companies towards each other before

before their junction. The instances related of theft, robbery, and murder, hitherto committed with impunity, render it sufficiently evident 'that the extensive countries occupied by the North-west Company are in a state which calls aloud for the attention of the British legislature; and that the honour of the nation cannot fail to be tarnished, if the outrages now practised be allowed to go on without effectual check or interference.' As matters stand, there is scarcely a possibility of bringing an offender to justice for crimes committed within the 'Indian territories,' however atrocious. The only act of the British legislature which relates to them is that of 43 Geo. III. cap. 138, commonly called the 'Canada Jurisdiction Act;' the countries over which its operations extend are so vaguely defined, that the persons who drew it up must, as Lord Selkirk thinks, have been ignorant of the existence of any British colony in North America, except Upper and Lower Canada. By this law all acts of violence and oppression must be tried in Montreal, a distance of three or four thousand miles from many parts of the 'Indian territories,' and thither the parties must repair by an inland navigation, far more tedious and difficult than a voyage to England. At Montreal, a Canadian criminal is in the midst of his friends and connections, with his employers on the spot, anxious to defend him. 'But how is it,' asks Lord Selkirk, 'with the English trader, who is dragged down by this route to take his trial in a place where he is an utter stranger—in the midst of his enemies—where his employer may probably not have a correspondent to pay the smallest attention to his interest, and where he cannot bring down a single witness for his defence, except at an enormous expense and inconvenience?'

One case only, it seems, has been brought to trial under this act, and we most heartily concur in Lord Selkirk's observation, that 'the whole transaction which gave rise to that trial, and the singular proceedings connected with it, are of a description scarcely to be equalled in the judicial annals of any age or country.' It is too long to extract, but the case is briefly this: In the year 1809, a party of the North-west Company, under the command of one Eneas Mac Donnel, armed with swords and pistols, assaulted and plundered an unarmed party of the Hudson's Bay Company, wounded several, and pursued them to their house, where John Mowat, a servant of the Hudson's Bay Company, whom Mac Donnel had previously struck with his sword and was preparing to strike again, shot Mac Donnel on the spot. To prevent further bloodshed, Mowat stepped forward and voluntarily surrendered himself; and it was settled that two of the Hudson's Bay servants should be taken down with him to Montreal, as witnesses in his behalf. The treatment of Mowat during eighteen

teen months confinement at Fort William, where he was loaded with heavy irons, in a miserable dungeon about eight feet square, without window or light of any kind, is of so disgraceful and barbarous a character, as scarcely to be credited. His witnesses, who were subject to every sort of insult and indignity, were not allowed to see him when sick, till he grew dangerously ill. They 'found him in a most lamentable state, his arms cut with his fetters, and his body covered with boils;' and when at length he was brought out of his dungeon, to be sent to Montreal, he fell down from weakness. The two witnesses who had volunteered a journey of fifteen hundred miles, were, on their arrival at Montreal, entrapped, and committed by a magistrate to the common gaol, 'for aiding and abetting one John Mowat in the murder of Eneas Mac Donnel,' in order to prevent any one from appearing in his favour. In this gaol they remained six months, when they, together with Mowat, were indicted for murder. The Grand Jury found a true bill against Mowat, but none against them; so that, fortunately for the accused, they became competent witnesses. The delay had, however, the advantage of procuring counsel for his defence, which it appears was highly necessary. From the extensive commercial establishment, and the limited population of Montreal, where the partners form a principal part of the society, and are connected, by marriage or consanguinity, with almost all the principal families, it may be supposed that it is not easy to find either a grand or a petty jury totally unconnected with the North-west Company, and that even the bench may not be wholly free from bias: but the proceedings of the trial are so extraordinary that Lord Selkirk shall speak for himself.—

'In the case of Mowat it is well known that several partners of the North-west Company were upon the grand jury which found the bill of indictment; and out of four judges, who sat upon the bench, two were nearly related to individuals of that association. In the course of the trial circumstances occurred which could not have taken place in a court of justice in England, without exciting indignation from one end of the kingdom to the other. The counsel for the prisoner was repeatedly interrupted in his cross-examination of the witnesses for the prosecution, by the judges prompting the witness, and helping him to preserve his consistency. One of these witnesses however did, on his cross-examination, acknowledge facts totally inconsistent with the evidence which he had given upon his examination in chief; and upon this, one of the judges interrupted the counsel in an angry tone, and reproached him for having made the witness contradict himself. It was with great difficulty that the advocate for the prisoner could obtain leave to address the jury on the point of law, and to explain the distinction between murder and justifiable homicide. His argument was repeatedly interrupted from the bench; and, notwithstanding the clearest

clearest evidence that Mac Donnel began the fray in the most unprovoked and unprincipled manner, that he was engaged in an act of direct robbery, and that he was threatening the lives of Mowat and his fellow-servants at the time he was shot; it was the opinion of the bench, that the man who killed him was guilty of *murder*, and such was their charge to the jury. After a consultation of fifteen or sixteen hours, the jury brought in a verdict of *manslaughter*.'—p. 103.

Mowat was sentenced to six months imprisonment, and to be branded on the hand with a hot iron! His friends endeavoured to prevail on him to petition the president of the province to have the burning on the hand remitted: the petition was drawn up, and the jury joined in the object of it; but every attempt to persuade Mowat to sign it was unavailing; he remained inflexible, declaring that he would ask no favour in a country where he had been so unjustly condemned; and he was burnt in the hand in pursuance of his sentence.

Lord Selkirk winds up the catalogue of the crimes of the North-west Company, by contrasting them with the honourable views, the fair dealing, and the moderation of the Hudson's Bay Company. Perhaps, however, the true point of contrast consists in the energy of the one and the apathy of the other—between the dangers, the fatigue and the sufferings from cold and hunger, endured by one set of people, and the torpid state of existence which the others drag on, not very unlike that of the cold-blooded animals by whom they are surrounded. Shut up in summer and winter within their three forts, situated on the shores of Hudson's Bay, these people, for a long time, held no other intercourse with the native Indians than receiving from them, at the foot of their walls, their bear skins and beaver skins, their goose quills and castoreum, at one end of a rope, and lowering down at the other their value in blankets, baubles and brandy. Of the fatigue, drudgery and activity of the servants of the North-west Company, a tolerable good notion may be formed from Sir A. Mackenzie's 'General History of the Fur Trade.' In treating of the indulgence, to which he thinks the North-west Company entitled, of conducting their trade to and from the interior by the Nelson river into Hudson's Bay, he says,—

'The enhanced value of the articles, and the present difficulty of transporting them, will be fully comprehended when I relate, that the tract of transport occupies an extent of from three to four thousand miles, through upwards of sixty large lakes, and numerous rivers, and that the means of transport are slight bark canoes. It must also be observed that those waters are intercepted by more than two hundred rapids, along which the articles of merchandise are chiefly carried on men's backs, and over one hundred and thirty carrying-places, from twenty-five paces to thirteen miles in length, where the canoes and cargoes proceed by the same toilsome and perilous operations.'

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Lord Selkirk, however, has no intention of entering the lists as a rival trader with the North-west Company, his grand object being that of establishing a body of industrious farmers in the interior of the Indian territories; to create an increased population, an effective police, and a regular administration of justice, than which, he says, nothing can be a greater object of dread to those who maintain a commercial monopoly by the habitual exercise of illegal violence; 'and who never will be fully satisfied unless the extensive regions in the north-west of America continue in the exclusive occupation of the savage Indians, the wild beasts of the forest and themselves.'

We have strong doubts, we confess, of the policy as well as the efficacy of Lord Selkirk's plan of colonization. While we have such valuable possessions as the Cape of Good Hope and Ceylon, (perhaps, politically speaking, the most valuable of all others,) almost without a population, we cannot observe without the deepest regret the tide of emigration setting so strongly to the North-westward—but leaving the consideration of this point for the present—we can discover little to be gained on the side of 'morality.' Even the decent, quiet, sober-minded Highlander, and the well-disposed Canadian, after a few years service in the 'fur trade,' part with the 'innocence of their habits,' and 'return home much corrupted:' and does Lord Selkirk suppose that the discharged soldiers from Meuron's regiment will preserve *their* 'innocence?' that they will sit down quietly where he may choose to fix them, labouring, 'in the sweat of their brows, merely to gain a subsistence?' Placed, as they must necessarily be till a population has been created, far beyond any market to receive their surplus produce, and scattered, as they would take especial care to be, at a wide distance from each other, is there not every reason to apprehend that they would quit the plough and the spade to engage in the 'fur trade?'—this alone, according to Lord Selkirk's maxim, would at once convert their innocence into brutal ferocity, and render them fit associates for the subjects of the back settlements of a neighbouring state. Like the inhabitants of Pittsburgh, they would soon learn to hunt Indians 'during the shooting season,' and scalp them for their profit or their amusement.

But if England cannot profit from the colonization of these remote regions, it may not be amiss to consider what advantage she is likely to derive from their produce. The whole concern of the 'fur trade,' which has occasioned the disgraceful proceedings here stated, never exceeds, by Lord Selkirk's account, 300,000*l.*—'a branch of commerce which gives occasion to the exportation of 40 or 50,000*l.* of British manufactures,'—and in which three ships are employed! Even this miserable trade, according to Lord Selkirk,

Selkirk, is verging rapidly towards its ruin. The system of the North-west Company, he says, is to obtain a great immediate return of furs, without any regard to its permanent continuance, and with this view a war of extermination is waged against all the valuable fur-bearing animals; the beaver, the most valuable of them, will, he tells us, in no long period of time, be nearly extirpated by the 'gigantic system of *poaching* carried on by the North-west Company.' It may be so; though we confess our fears incline rather towards the extermination of the Indians, than of the 'fur-bearing animals;' the former are confessedly disappearing in a rapid progression, while the latter will, from that circumstance, as rapidly increase. The enumeration of one year's supply to the North-west Company, as given by Sir Alexander Mackenzie, will afford some estimate of the number and kind of animals annually destroyed. They are as follows:—Skins of the beaver, 106,000; the bear, 2,100; the fox, 5,500; the otter, 4,600; the musquash, 17,000; the marten, 32,000; the mink, 1800; the lynx, 6,000; the wolverine, 600; the fisher, 1,650; the raccoon, 100; the wolf, 3,800; the elk, 700; the deer 1,950. By doubling those numbers in order to take in the consumption of the native Indians, those lost and destroyed on the passage, and those exported by the Hudson's Bay Company, we shall perhaps come pretty nearly to the actual number destroyed every year: nor is there any thing very surprizing in this great slaughter, when we consider what quantities of game are consumed even in well peopled countries, without the smallest risk of extirpating the breed. The only remarkable feature here is the vast multitudes of various animals to be found within the cold and apparently barren regions of the Arctic circle. Mons. Jeremie, once governor of Fort Bourbon, (now York,) says, that when the rein-deer are driven out of the thickets by the clouds of mosquitoes which, on the return of summer darken the air, they fly to the shores of Hudson's Bay, in herds of ten thousand, scouring across these bleak and naked plains, untrodden perhaps by ten human beings in the course of as many years. We learn from the same authority, fully corroborated by the testimony of travellers, that the flocks of geese and swans, of cranes, cormorants, bustards, pelicans and ducks are so numerous as to obscure the sky, and so noisy, in rising from the ground, as to deafen the bye-standers. M. Jeremie, and his garrison of eighty men, caught and consumed, in one winter, ninety thousand white partridges, and twenty-five thousand hares. The rein-deer are the most numerous of the larger animals, but elks, bears, buffaloes, the musk ox and the moose deer are all abundant. Nor are the waters less productive. The sea and the straits are amply stocked with the whale and the narwal, the grampus, the seal, and the sea-horse—

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the lakes and rivers with salmon, sturgeon, trout, pike, and carp; so successfully are animals enabled to struggle against every inconvenience of soil or climate, and to 'increase and multiply, and replenish the earth,' when undisturbed by the presence of man. As far however as the beaver is concerned, Lord Selkirk's apprehensions may not be unfounded. His haunts are known, and his habitation, constructed with such wonderful industry and skill, is easily discovered: most of the others have a retreat beyond the reach of man.

In taking leave of Lord Selkirk, we shall just observe, that his 'Sketch of the Fur Trade' is in no respect equal, as to information, to the 'History' of that trade, by Sir Alexander Mackenzie. Its character, indeed, is less that of a history, than of a Bill of Indictment against the North-west Company—an angry attack on the provincial administration of justice—and a panegyric on the Hudson's Bay Company. The points at issue between the conflicting parties are matters not for us to intermeddle with; we have no desire to prejudice or prejudge the case of either; but we cannot join in the praise ascribed to the Hudson's Bay Company, whose only merits (if they have any) are, at any rate, of the negative kind. Their total disregard of every object for which they obtained, and have now held, a Royal Charter for nearly one hundred and fifty years, entitles them to any thing but praise. The great leading feature on which their petition for an exclusive charter was grounded, the discovery of a North-west Passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific, has not only been totally neglected, but, unless they have been grossly calumniated, thwarted by every means in their power. The examination of the work, whose title stands at the head of this article, will lead to a few observations on their conduct in this respect.

The Spaniards cannot disavow the name of Maldonado, as they have done that of Fuente. It has been registered with applause by their most authentic bibliographers; and consecrated, as it were, by assigning to it the best port in their possessions on the east side of South America: nor can they deny the existence of the journal of such a voyage, as the one in question; having sent so recently as 1789, the corvettes *la Discubierta et l'Atravida*, under the orders of Malaspina, to examine the passages and inlets, which might be found to break the continuity of the line of coast of North-west America, between 53° and 60° of N. latitude; 'in order to discover the strait by which Laurent Ferrer Maldonado was supposed to have passed in 1588, from the coast of Labrador to the Great Ocean.' That this was the main object of the expedition appears from a letter of a friend of Malaspina, employed on the voyage, which was seen by Amoretti,

retti, and which states that the journal of Maldonado was in the hands of the Duc de l'Infantado: the same circumstance is mentioned by the writer of the Introduction to the voyage of *Le Sutil* and *Mexicana*, published at Madrid in 1802, who says that the Commander of this expedition was furnished with a copy of it, taken from that of the Duc de l'Infantado.—It is sufficiently clear, therefore, that the Spaniards of the present day are disposed to believe that some such voyage was made: they have, in fact, very strong testimony concerning it. In the *Bibliotheca Hispana* of Nicolao Antonio, under the article 'Laurent Ferrer Maldonado,' we are told that he was well skilled in nautical matters and in geography; that he published a book entitled '*Imagen del Mundo, &c.*'—and that he (Nicolao Antonio) had seen in the hands of Mascarenas, bishop of Segovia, the manuscript of a Voyage, 'being the Relation of the Discovery of the Strait of Anian, made by the author in the year 1588.'* Antonio de Leon Pinelo† also bears testimony to his talents as a navigator, and tells us, that he presented to the Council of the Indies (of which Pinelo was a member) two plans, one relating to rendering the magnetic needle not subject to variation, the other, to finding the longitude at sea. Now Pinelo, Antonio, the Bishop of Segovia, and Maldonado, were contemporaries; so that all doubt of the co-existence of such a person and such a manuscript is removed; and it is to be presumed that the members of the 'Consejo de las Indias' had the latter in their keeping, Mascarenas being a member and senator of that board. The question is, whether the manuscript, of which Amoretti has published the translation, in Italian, and afterwards in French, is the identical one mentioned by Antonio, and written by Maldonado?

The account which Amoretti gives of it is this: and we have always found so much good faith in the Italian publishers of voyages and travels, from Ramusio to the present time, that we are inclined to yield implicit credence to his story. He says, that in examining the manuscripts of the Ambrosian library of Milan, of which he is librarian, with a view to publish (agreeably to the intention of its founder, the Cardinal Boromeo) such of them as should be found to contain new and instructive matter, his attention was arrested by a small volume written

* 'Laurentius Ferrer Maldonado militiæ olim, &c.—'*Imagen del Mundo sobre la Esfera, Cosmografia, Geografia, y arte de Navigar, compluti apud Johannem Garsiam,* 1626.'

'*Relacion del Descubrimiento del Estrecho de Anian hecho por el Autor.* Quam vidi M.S. apud D. Hieronymum Mascarenas regium ordinum militarium, deinde Conciliæ Portugalliæ Senatorem, Segoviensem nunc Antistitem. Expeditionem autem hanc nauticam se fecisse anno 1588 autor ait.'—*Bib. Hisp.* tom. ii. p. 2.

† Epitome de la Biblioteca Oriental y Occidental, Nautica y Geografica, Madrid. 1629.

in the Spanish language, and entitled 'A Relation of the Discovery of the Strait of Anian by Captain Laurent Ferrer Maldonado, towards the end of the 16th century,' &c. At first he considered it only as a tale to amuse the curious; but on reading it with attention, he found it stamped so strongly with the character of authenticity and veracity, that he determined to translate it, and to add to it some notes and a treatise to prove the truth of the 'Relation;' and as M. de Humboldt and others had consigned it to the rank of geographical impostures, before they knew what it contained, he conceived himself called upon to justify the manuscript and his own researches, by giving to the world the present volume. He states fairly that he has not been able to trace, nor can he conjecture, how this manuscript had come into the possession of the founder of the Milan library; but the writing, he observes, is that of the end of the sixteenth, or beginning of the seventeenth century; and from the paper having on it 'le filigrane du Pèlerin,' a common mark on the paper of that period, he conjectures it was written at Milan; concluding from the frequent omissions and the faults in the orthography, that it must have been copied in haste. How far this document may be entitled to the character of 'veracity or authenticity' a brief examination will enable us to judge.

The memoir, or 'Relation' as it is called, consists of thirty-five paragraphs.

The first eight are employed chiefly in enumerating the advantages that would result to Spain from the navigation to the Indies by the North-west passage; as the shortness of the voyage—the monopoly of the spice trade—the facility of sending troops to the colonies—and the opening of a new door for the conversion of pagans. To secure these advantages, the necessity is pointed out of Spain being the first to get possession of the Strait of Anian; and the king is reminded that, the year before, the English had sent some ships in search of it,—all of which might just as well have been written by a clerk in the India Board of Madrid as by Maldonado. The last observation, however, is so far important that it determines the date of the memorial to be that of the voyage, the expedition of Davis in 1587 being that of the preceding year alluded to.

The ninth to the sixteenth inclusive contains general instructions for the navigation. They inform us, that by steering N.W. and running 450 leagues from Lisbon, the navigator will reach Friesland, anciently called Thyle, an island somewhat less than Iceland, lying in 60° N. latitude, and by continuing on that parallel 120 leagues, he will open the Strait of Labrador, 30 leagues in width; the land, on the left, low; on the right, mountainous; the latter forming two straits, one running to the N.E., the other to the N.W.—that to the north-west must be taken, and when the navigator

gator has run 80 leagues, he will find himself in 64°: from hence the strait takes a northerly direction, 120 leagues, to 72°, and then changes to the N.W. for 90 leagues, or to the 75th degree of latitude; the whole length of the Strait of Labrador being 240 leagues, (it should be 290). From the northern extremity of the Strait of Labrador, the course changes to S.W. ¼ W. through an open sea, 350 leagues, which will reduce the latitude to 71°, and here some high land will appear on the coast of America. The course then changes to W.S.W. for 440 leagues, when the navigator will find himself on the 60th parallel of latitude, and at the entrance of the Strait of Anian. Maldonado then recapitulates the distances which he himself sailed, and which he states to be, from Spain to Friesland, 460 leagues; from thence to Labrador, 180; from thence through the Straits, 280; making 920; to which adding 790 across the sea, the total distance from Spain to the Strait of Anian is 1710 leagues.

Passing over the numerical blunders, we shall content ourselves with two observations on this part of the 'Relation:' the first is, that he sails along the northern coast of Labrador, or through Hudson's Straits, 290 leagues, an intricate and perilous navigation, through narrow passes so choked up with ice as frequently to make it nearly impracticable even in the summer months;—yet Maldonado clears the whole of them, up to the 75th degree of latitude, *before* the month of March; that is to say, when the sun at noon was about 13° high, and the day not five hours long.—The second observation is, that taking the courses and distances steered from the northern mouth of the Strait of Labrador, namely S.W. ¼ W. 350 leagues, and W.S.W. 440 leagues; the latitude at the end of the first would *not* be 71°, *nor* at the end of the second 60°; and that, with these courses and distances, the navigator, instead of arriving at the Strait of Anian, (now Behring's Strait,) would be astonished to find himself on the other side of the peninsula of Kamschatka, in the midst of the sea of Oskotsk, if the old Spanish league of 17½ to the degree be reckoned; and 20 leagues to the degree would have carried him to the middle of the sea of Kamschatka.

The seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth paragraphs relate chiefly to the short days and cold weather in going, the long days and warm weather in returning, the ease with which the Northern Ocean is navigated, and the error of those who suppose it to be entirely frozen over: he had before adverted to the possibility of persons being surprized to hear him talk of navigating in so high a latitude; but, says he, the Hanseatics live in 72°, and we see every year, in their port of St. Michael, from 500 to 1000 ships, which must necessarily proceed to the parallel of 75° before they can pass thither from the Sea of Flanders.

The north cape, round which ships 'must necessarily proceed' in order to pass into the White Sea, is in latitude 71° 10′ and is usually passed in 72° and from that to 73° instead of 75°, and the port of St. Michael is in 64½. These little mistakes could scarcely have been made by Maldonado, who was 'well skilled in the art of navigation,' and who had written a treatise on geography. The port, besides, in 1558, was named St. Nicholas, and the town Kholmogar; it then consisted of nine houses; and the trade, almost wholly English, was carried on in nine ships. In 1637 the town was burned down, and on being re-built it took the name of Archangel, from an adjoining monastery dedicated to the Archangel Michael:—circumstances which lead us to suspect that the 'Relation' was written about the middle of the seventeenth, instead of the end of the sixteenth century.

The twentieth to the thirty-second paragraph inclusive contains a topographical description of the celebrated strait of Anian, and the adjoining coasts of Asia and America, which, Maldonado is pleased to inform the king of Spain, are separated by it. To ascertain its relative position, the author takes a cruise of fifteen days; sailing S. W. one hundred leagues along the coast of America, he was then in the latitude of 55°; but on the whole of this coast he saw no traces of population. Now it so happens, that, from his port in Anian, which he repeatedly tells us is situated in 60°, a S. W. course for one hundred leagues could not, as every common seaman could tell this 'skilful navigator,' bring him into latitude 55°, nor permit him to see any part of the coast of America; its direction, instead of S. W. being rather to the *Eastward* of South. From the parallel of 55° however, he steers directly east 120 leagues, which would have brought him, in fact, to the very middle of the sea of Kamschatka; instead of which he found himself so near to the coast of a mountainous continent, that in many places he could see the natives; and on this he sagaciously observes, that, 'according to correct cosmography, he judged that the land belonged to Tartary or Catai, and that the great city of Cambalu (Pekin) was only a few leagues distant.'

Such gross blunders in plain sailing and geography could not possibly be committed by one 'skilled in navigation:'—but we proceed to his topography of the Strait, and his description of the port at its southern extremity. He says, that on the coast of America, at the mouth of the strait which opens into the South Sea, there is a port capable of containing 500 vessels; that no human foot had trodden its shores, as would appear from a pond, on whose margin lay an infinite quantity of egg-shells of sea-fowls, which formed a kind of wall or dyke above a *para* (3½ feet) high, and eight paces broad. A river fell into the harbour,

bour, into which a vessel of 500 tons might enter. The surrounding country was delightful to behold, consisting of plains of great extent, capable of tillage; the air soft and agreeable; and the mildness of the winter apparent from the excellent fruits found dried on the trees, and remaining on them from the preceding year. Birds, beasts and fishes abounded in this fine climate under the 60th parallel, in which nature would seem to have forgotten nothing but man; for none appeared during their stay.

We did not expect to find Cook called upon to support this description of Maldonado; yet so it is. Amoretti is so much prepossessed in favour of the 'veracity and the authenticity' of the 'Relation,' that he traces the most perfect accordance between the two navigators. No two descriptions however can be more at variance. Instead of any port, bay, or inlet, under the parallel of 60°, Cook found a straight coast; and a low point, to which he gave the name of Shoal-ness, occupies the place of Maldonado's harbour: the country perfectly naked, producing neither tree nor shrub; but no less than twenty-seven canoes came off from the very spot, each having a man in it. According to Cook, Behring's Strait is about sixty leagues long, and fourteen wide, in the narrowest part; the strait of Anian, in Maldonado, is fifteen leagues long, at the northern extremity not quite *half an English mile wide*, and at the southern about a *quarter of a league*, in the middle of which is a great rock or islet; so that, he observes, the whole strait is capable of being defended with a chain, provided one could be made strong enough; but at all events two sentinels on the northern part, and three on the southern, one on each continent, and one on the islet, could give immediate notice by signals of the approach of ships either from the Northern or the Pacific Ocean.

This description somewhat staggers Amoretti, though he is disposed to think that a point might be stretched on this occasion, by reading *breadth* for length, and thus bringing the fifteen leagues of Maldonado pretty nearly to the fourteen of Cook; but the difficulty of getting rid of the width would still remain. The Duc d'Almadover, however, helps him out of his dilemma, by suggesting that some extraordinary convulsion of the two coasts may have enlarged the strait since Maldonado's time, to the size which Cook found it to be; in short, any thing to give credit to the Voyage of Maldonado, and accommodate its geographical difficulties to the easy credulity of Amoretti. And though we now know that the Strait of Anian extends from the 66th to the 70th parallels of northern latitude, Maldonado, he says, called it 60, 'because all the preceding geographers of that century had laid down the Strait of Anian in 60° N. latitude,

as appears from the charts of Hortelius and Mercator, published in 1570.' These charts might mislead the writer of a voyage made by the fireside, but it required not a 'skilful' navigator to detect their errors on the spot.

But the thirty-third paragraph, which exceeds in absurdity all the rest, establishes in the mind of Amoretti the authenticity of the 'Relation,' and places its veracity beyond all doubt. It states that being about to leave the harbour towards the middle of June, a large vessel of 800 tons burden was observed to approach from the South Sea, steering directly for the Strait. Finding the strangers to be pacifically inclined, mutual civilities were exchanged, and Maldonado received from them some presents of silks, porcelaine, &c. such as are brought from China. The people appeared to be Muscovites, or Hanseatics, from the bay of St. Nicholas or St. Michael: to understand each other they were under the necessity of conversing in Latin; the strangers seemed to be Christians, and if not Catholics, were at least Lutherans. They said they came from a great city more than 100 leagues off, which Maldonado thinks (but he is not sure) they called *Robr*, or something like it, which they told him had a very extensive harbour, upon a navigable river, and belonged to the King of Tartary: they added, that they had left there another ship belonging to their countrymen. As they treated our discoverer with very little confidence, this was all that could be got out of them: they sailed together, it would seem, through the Strait, when coming into the North Sea, the stranger bore away to the westward, and Maldonado pursued his route for Spain the same way he had come.

Our English sailors would most certainly have at once set down this mysterious vessel for the 'Flying Dutchman,' so frequently seen off the Cape of Good Hope, but luckily for Maldonado his more enlightened crew were addicted to no such idle superstitions. 'It would seem,' says Amoretti, with great naïveté, 'that this vessel, turning to the left after passing the Strait, coasted Siberia, and consequently that Deschnew was not the first who made this voyage.' After all that Cook and King have discovered and published; after all the fruitless attempts of the Russians to circumnavigate the northern coast of Siberia, one can scarcely imagine that any man of common understanding, much less of some research, which M. Amoretti certainly is, could for a moment lend himself to such an idle tale, which, as the editor of the Voyage of *Sutil* and *Mexicana* observes, 'is full of false calculations, of incredible circumstances, and gross fictions of every kind.' —But he who can really believe that the north-west passage has actually been made by several navigators; that some straits have been shut up, others opened, and that islands have disappeared by 'con-

'convulsions of nature' within the last two centuries, is capable of believing any thing, however absurd. We can safely assure M. Amoretti that the account of 'one Cluny' having made this passage in 1745; of his having solicited the reward offered by our government, without obtaining it; of the Hudson's Bay Company finding means to prevent his journal being published, is destitute of all foundation. The compiler of the 'Histoire Générale des Voyages' is not the only Frenchman in whose hands an English work is not safe from misrepresentation or misapprehension. Cluny wrote a book called the 'American Traveller,' in which he reprobates in strong language the conduct of the Hudson's Bay Company, and lays down a variety of plans and projects for the improvement of the American colonies; but he is so far from pretending to have made the north-west passage, that he even doubts its existence; but in his chart prefixed, there are two parallel dotted lines from Repulse Bay to the Icy Sea, over which is written—'Here is supposed to be the North-west Passage;'—which Vaugondy, the king's geographer, in a chart approved by the 'Académie Royale des Sciences,' has thus translated—'Côte parcourue par le Capitaine Cluny, auteur de l'*American Traveller*.'

We suspect this pretended voyage of Maldonado to be the clumsy and audacious forgery of some ignorant German, from the circumstance of 15 leagues to the degree being used in some of the computations. It is, indeed, a fit companion for Damberger's Travels; and we cannot but regret that Amoretti should have thought he was fulfilling the intention of the pious founder of the Ambrosian library in selecting so palpable a fiction for publication, and still more that he should have undertaken to defend it. We do not, however, hesitate to express our firm belief that Maldonado *did* perform a voyage; and that Nicolao Antonio *did* see the journal of that voyage in the hands of the Bishop of Segovia: it was not, however, a voyage for the discovery of the 'north-west passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific,' (no such discovery being once mentioned by the Spanish bibliographer,) but simply 'for the discovery of the Strait of Anian.' That Spain should be extremely anxious for the security of her possessions in the Pacific and Indian oceans, when she saw the English with extraordinary perseverance sending out expeditions year after year, for the avowed purpose of discovering a nearer route to those seas, and when their armed cruizers, unauthorized it is true, but countenanced by the government, were destroying the Spanish commerce on the western coasts of America, was exceedingly natural. She must have seen these bold undertakings with alarm, and that would dictate to her the policy of ascertaining whether any and what kind of an outlet into the Pacific was likely to favour the enterprize of so active an enemy, and what

the means were to secure from surprize her valuable possessions, extending from Peru to the Philippine islands:—in short, to ascertain the existence and the nature of this Strait of Anian as marked in all the early charts, and now become an object of the first importance. For such a purpose Maldonado was a proper person to be employed; and that he was so employed, but proceeded round Cape Horn, we have very little doubt. No Spaniard, that we know of, ever entered, or attempted to enter, Hudson's Bay in search of the N. W. passage, except Estovan Gomez in 1525; but 'of this Steven Gomez,' says Purchas, 'little is left us but a jest.' He reached only the coast of Newfoundland in the 50th parallel of latitude, and carried off some of the natives. Being asked, on his return, what he had brought home, he answered *Esclavos*, which the inquirer mistaking for *clavos*, or cloves, concluded that Gomez had discovered the north-west passage to the Moluccas; 'and so posted to the Court,' says Purchas, 'to carry the first news of this spicy discovery.'

The object of Maldonado's voyage being that of reconnoitring rather than of making discoveries, it could not be expected that the Spaniards would publish it; they had, indeed, at that time, matters of far greater importance to attend to—the arms of England had just destroyed what the elements had spared of their 'invincible Armada.'—Under these circumstances the precautionary voyage of Maldonado was likely to remain among those unpublished manuscripts which the Duc d'Almadover supposes 'to have been buried in the dust of the archives of Madrid,' and which Delisle says, 'have been so carefully concealed, that at this day the Spaniards themselves know nothing about them.' If by any means the spurious production in question was foisted into the records of the 'Council for the Indies,' its members, by withholding it from publication, have given a further proof of that sound discretion which induced them 'to bury in the dust of their archives' forty-nine of the fifty memorials which Capitan Pedro Fernandez de Quiros presented to the king, eight of which, by his own statement, related to a settlement which it behoved his majesty to make on a land then undiscovered (*Australia incognita*), and since known to have no existence.

But Maldonado probably discovered the strait he was sent in search of, and there are grounds for concluding that he describes it to lie about the 59th or 60th parallel of latitude, because the instructions of Malaspina directed him to look for it as far as 60° north. Now Maldonado, in coasting America from the southward, could not have reached that latitude before he fell in with Cook's Inlet, which extends from about 58½° to 61½°, and is a strait of considerable magnitude, the width between Cape Douglas and Cape Elizabeth being about

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18 or 20 leagues: and as the Strait of Anian was laid down in the 60° of latitude in all the charts at the time of Maldonado, and as he found the land stretching on the one side to the south-east, and on the other to the south-west, it was most natural that this navigator should conclude that Cook's Inlet was the identical strait which he was sent to discover; and that it separated the two great continents of Asia and America. We must not forget that Cook, who, with all the advantage of Behring's discoveries and chart, was employed twelve days in ascertaining that it was *not* a strait, observes, that if he 'had not examined this very considerable inlet, it would have been assumed, by speculative fabricators of geography, as a fact, that it communicated with the sea to the north, or with Baffin's or Hudson's Bay to the east.'

Destitute as we consider the 'Relation' of Maldonado to be both of 'veracity and authenticity,' we are by no means inclined to suppose that such a voyage as it describes is impracticable. We firmly believe, on the contrary, that a navigable passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific round the northern coast of America does exist, and may be of no difficult execution. Why, then, it may be asked, have all the attempts made at different times, from both sides the continent of America, failed? Because not one of them was ever made near that part of the coast of America, round which it is most likely the passage would lead into the Frozen or Northern ocean. To prove this we must take a glance at what has been done; and if our readers should feel that pride and pleasure, which we do, in reviewing the daring enterprizes and the perilous and persevering efforts of our early navigators in the frozen regions of the North, they will not deem a brief survey of them tedious or misplaced*—'Resolute, gallant, glorious attempts!' exclaims that quaint but delightful old writer of the 'Pilgrimage,'—

'How,' continues he, 'shall I admire your heroicke courage, ye marine worthies, beyond all names of worthiness! that neyther dread so long eyther

* We owe much of the rapid growth of our infant navy to those voyages; and we may here take occasion to observe, that the honourable appellation of Father of the British Navy has not been justly conferred on Henry VIII. The real founder of a permanent navy, distinct from the Cinque-port Marine, was the Conqueror of Agincourt. Among the many curious documents brought to light by the present able and industrious keeper of the records in the Tower, is a letter of Henry V. dated 12th August, 1417, directing the Lord Chancellor to issue letters-patent under the great seal, granting a sort of half-pay or annuity to 'certaine maistres for owr owne grete shippes, carrackes, barges and balyngers.' That this monarch had regular King's ships, distinct from the mercantile marine, is further corroborated by that curious poem in Hackluit's collection, called the 'English Policie, &c.' which complains of the neglect of the navy by Henry VI. and extols 'the policie of keeping the see in the time of the marveillous werriour and victorious prince, King Henrie the fift and of his grete shippes.'—We like the 'policie' better than the poetry.

'And if I should conclude all by the King
Henrie the Fift, what was his purposing

When

eyther presence or absence of the sunne; nor those foggy mysts, tempestuous winds, cold blasts, snowes and hayle in the ayre: nor the unequall seas, which might amaze the hearer, and amate the beholder, where the *Tritons* and *Neptune*'s selfe would quake with chilling feare, to behold such monstrous icie ilands, renting themselves with terrour of their own owne massines, and disdayning otherwise both the seas sovereigntie, and the sunne's hottest violence, mustering themselves in those watery plaines where they hold a continual civill warre, and rushing one upon another, make windes and waves give backe; seeming to rent the eares of others, while they rent themselves with crashing and splitting their congealed armours.'

The flourishing commerce of the Portugueze and Spaniards in the Indian seas stimulated the merchants of England to a participation in that great source of wealth, by the discovery of a passage that would shorten the voyage to India and China to less than half the distance of that round the Cape of Good Hope or Cape Horn. Such a passage was, in fact, supposed to have been made by Caspar de Cortereal, a Portugueze of some rank, in the year 1500. He touched at Newfoundland, passed over to *Terra Verde*, afterwards called *Terra de Cortereal*, and gave to the southern part of it, which was fit for cultivation, the name of *Terra de Labrador*. Then coasting to the northward and opening out a wide passage (now called Hudson's Strait) he concluded he had discovered the so much desired passage round America, which he is said to have named the Strait of *Anian*; not however, as we conceive, 'in honour of two brothers who accompanied him,' but because he deemed it to be the *eastern* extremity of a strait, whose *western* end opening into the Pacific, had already received that name. He hastened back to Portugal to communicate the agreeable intelligence, and was sent the following year to complete the discovery, but was never heard of more; and his brother Michael de Cortereal, who afterwards went in search of him, shared the same fate.

The first Englishman who undertook the discovery of a North-

When at Hampton, he made the *Great Dromons*
Which passed other grete shippes of the Commons;
The *Trinitie*, the *Grace de Dieu*, the *Holy Ghost*
And other moe, which as now be lost,
What hope ye was the King's grete intent
Of thoo shippes, and what in mind he meant;
It was not ellis, but that he cast to bee
Lord round-about environ of the See.

Better indeed is Henry VII. entitled to be called the friend and founder of the navy than his successor. It was he who caused the *Great Harry* to be built at the expense of 15,000*l.* an enormous sum in those days. It was he too who engaged the Cabots of Venice in the discovery of Newfoundland; and it was accident only that prevented him from employing Columbus. But the spirit of discovery and foreign enterprize died away and revived only in full vigour after receiving the fostering hand of Elizabeth, whose long and flourishing protection of it has been exceeded only by that of George III.

west

west passage to China, was Mr. (afterwards Sir Martin) Frobisher. He left England in the middle of July, 1576, with two small vessels and a pinnace, the largest only 25 tons; and proceeding to the entrance of a supposed strait in latitude 63° 10′ N. he returned to Harwich on the 2d October, bringing back from an island on the coast of Greenland 'one of the salvages' and some bright stones. The wife of one of the adventurers threw one of these stones accidentally into the fire, and having quenched it with vinegar, 'it glistered with a bright marquisset of gold.' The following year Frobisher anchored on the west coast of Greenland, where the 'stones be altogether sparkled, and glister in the sun like gold.' One of his people found the horn of a sea unicorn, into which some spiders being put immediately died; and 'these spiders,' we are told, 'as many affirm, are signs of great store of gold.' They also caught two women, one of whom was so ugly that the sailors suspected her to be the devil, and would not be convinced of the contrary, until they had stripped off her skin boots to see whether she had a cloven foot. Queen Elizabeth, it seems, was so much satisfied with the report of this voyage, that Frobisher was sent out for the third time the following year, to take possession of *Meta incognita* (Greenland) with 15 ships and 120 settlers; but the ice opposing their passage through the Strait, and the season being far advanced, they contented themselves with taking on board a large quantity of the 'glistering stones,' and returned to England. These stones we suppose turned out to be pieces of that beautiful iridescent spar known by the name of Labrador spar.

The unfavourable result of Frobisher's third expedition seems for a while to have cast a damp on the spirit of enterprize in this quarter; which however was revived in 1585, when some noblemen and gentlemen formed an association for effecting the discovery of the North-west passage, and John Davis, of Sandridge in Devonshire, was engaged to conduct the expedition. He left England with two ships, passed the south point of Greenland on the 20th July, to which, from its horrid appearance, he gave the name of the 'Land of Desolation,' then steered N. W. and making the land on the 6th August, in latitude 66° 40′ N., he gave to a high mountain 'glittering like gold,' the name of '*Mount Ralegh*.' Having doubled the South cape of this island, which he named 'Cape of God's Mercy,' he proceeded up a strait (Cumberland Strait of modern charts) 20 leagues wide, to the distance of 60 leagues, when adverse winds and tides obliged him to return. In 1586, Davis was again sent with four ships, but made no discoveries of importance, and reached not beyond his former latitude. On his third voyage in 1587, he was more successful,

cessful, having proceeded along the west coast of Greenland to the latitude of 72° 12′ N. He then steered a westerly course towards the continent of America, but being opposed by fields and mountains of ice, which alarmed his people, he coasted to the southward along the same land he had discovered on his first voyage; saw Lumley's Inlet between 62° and 63°, and returned to Dartmouth by the 15th September. In his short letter to Mr. Saunderson, the great promoter of the undertaking, he says, 'I have been in 73°, finding the sea all open, the passage most probable, the execution easy.'

The failure of Davis, however, put an end to any further attempt in that century; and in 1591 Sir James Lancaster was sent with five ships by the usual but circuitous route of the Cape of Good Hope. This officer, or some person for him, having added to one of his letters a postscript, in which he says 'the passage to the Indies is in the N. W. of America in 62° 30′ N.' the report of it once more revived the question; and, in 1602, Captain Waymouth left England with two fly-boats in search of the North-west passage. He succeeded in passing all the straits, and in reaching the latitude of 63° 55′ N. on the coast of America; (about Marble Island;) but here his crew mutinied, which obliged him to return to England. Knight and Hall, in 1606 and 1607, lost their lives in a scuffle with the natives before they had made any discovery of importance.

Notwithstanding all these failures, a society of merchants still persevered in the attempt to discover a northern route to India and China; they engaged, for this purpose, Captain Henry Hudson, a man of approved skill in seamanship, of great experience, and daring intrepidity. He left England in 1607, but instead of entering any of the straits, he stood directly for the East coast of Greenland, which he made in 73°, and named the point *Hold with Hope*. The weather continued mild, and even warm, till he reached the latitude of 78°; the sea open, with much drift-wood. In 80° 23′ N. he sent his boat on shore with the mate and boatswain, who quenched their thirst, the weather being hot, at two excellent streams of fresh water. He still advanced to the northward as high as 82° N. when falling in with mountains and fields of ice, he returned home, and arrived at Gravesend on the 15th September. The following year he made a second voyage, to attempt a passage between Spitzbergen and Nova Zembla, few particulars of which were made public, and these are not to our present purpose. The third, and, to him, the last and fatal voyage, was undertaken in 1610. Having passed the strait which now bears his name, and doubled the westernmost capes of Labrador, which he named Wolstenholme and Digges, he stood to the southward down the great bay

bay which bears his own name, and entered a harbour which they called Michaelmas, where it was Hudson's intention to pass the winter; but an accident prevented him, and he stood down to the lowest bite of the bay. Here the chief employ of his crew was to procure provisions, with which they appear to have been scantily supplied in the ship; but they killed about a hundred dozen of partridges as white as milk; and in the spring, when those left them, 'came birds of divers sorts, as swannes, goose, ducke, and teale.' While thus employed, a mutiny was stirred up among the ship's company by one Greene, a person whom Hudson had taken on board out of charity and treated as his own child. On leaving this spot, the mutineers forced Hudson, his son, and seven others into the boat, amidst fields of ice, with a scanty supply of provisions—she was never heard of more, and all that were in her must have miserably perished. The mutineers stood away for Digges's Island at the mouth of Hudson's Strait, where they found tents full of men, women, and children, 'bigge-boned, broad-faced, flat-nosed, and small-footed, like the Tartars.' Here Greene and another of the principal mutineers were shot by the natives, and three others died a few days after of their wounds: 'everywhere,' observes Purchas, 'can Divine justice find executioners.' The remainder of the crew, after taking on board about 400 sea-fowl which they caught on leaving the land, made the best of their way homewards, being reduced to the greatest distress, living chiefly on sea-weeds fryed with candle-ends, and the skins and feathers of the fowl they had eaten. The account of this unfortunate voyage is written by one of the crew named Habakuk Pricket, who, of course, endeavours to lay the whole blame on Greene and the others who had been killed by the Eskimeaux; but 'North-west Foxe,' in his remarks on the transaction, slily observes, 'Well, Pricket, I am in great doubt of thy fidelity to Master Hudson.'

This Habakuk Pricket, however, was engaged to accompany Sir Thomas Button two years after (1612) on the same voyage of discovery, with two ships whose names were the same as those under the celebrated Cook in his last voyage—the Resolution and the Discovery. He passed through Hudson's Strait, saw the south point of the large island named on some of our charts Southampton Island, and gave it the name of *Carey's Swan's Nest*, and steering from thence S.W. made the main land of America in 60° 40′, to which he gave the name of *Hope's Check*. Button wintered in Port Nelson, so called from his pilot, in latitude 57° 10′ N. which is now the principal station of the Hudson's Bay Company. He lost many men by cold and hunger, 'and yet,' says Foxe, 'he was supplied with great store of white partridges and other fowle, of which I have

have heard it credibly reported, that this Company killed eighteen hundred dozen in the winter season.' Button reached no higher than the latitude of 65° on the east coast of Southampton Island.

In 1614, Captain Gibbons was sent out in the Discovery; but his ship was beset by ice on the N.E. coast of Labrador, in about 57° N. where he remained nearly five months in a sort of bay, to which his ship's company, in derision, gave the name of *Gibbons his Hole;* escaping at last from his place of confinement, he made the best of his way home.

Robert Bylot, who had been with Hudson, Button, and Gibbons, now appointed master of the same ship, the Discovery, of 55 tons burden, set sail from England in April, 1615, passed through Hudson's Strait, as far as Cape Comfort, on the east coast of Southampton Island in latitude 65° N. but having proceeded northerly about half a degree, and finding, as he says, the water shallow, and the land trending to the N.E. (which, however, is doubtful,) he returned to England without making any discovery.

The following year, Bylot, with Baffin (who had acted as his pilot in the former voyage) proceeded again in the same ship, the Discovery, being her fifth voyage on the same object. They now stood along the west coast of Greenland; and saw some islands in 72° 15′, to which, finding women only on them, they gave the name of *Women's Islands;* they are situated close to the *Sanderson's Hope* of Davis, the extreme point which that navigator reached. Coasting from hence, in an open sea, they passed 'a fayre cape,' in latitude 76° 35′, which they named *Cape Dudley Digges;* then standing N. westerly they passed *Whale Sound,* in 77° 30′; then *Sir Thomas Smith's Sound,* which was choked up, not with ice, but with whales; and extended beyond 78° N. this being the farthest point they reached to the northward. They then stood five days to the southward of west, through *an open sea,* and saw *Alderman Jones's Sound,* in latitude 76° 30′; and in two days, standing more southerly, they opened *Sir James Lancaster's Sound;* from whence they continued their course two days southeasterly, the sea *still open,* till they came to latitude 71° 16′, when meeting with much ice, they struck off from the coast due east, and passing through Baffin's Strait, into the Strait of Davis, made the best of their way home: first touching, however, at Cockin Sound on the coast of Greenland, to collect scurvy grass, sorrel and orpine, for their sick, who, Baffin says, were cured in eight days by the scurvy grass (*cochlearia*) boiled in beer. This might be considered as the most important of all the voyages, if the brief account of it could be depended on; but there is nothing left on record, except a meagre sort of journal by Baffin, unaccompanied by any chart; Bylot, as would appear from Habakuk Pricket's

Pricket's narrative of Hudson's Voyage, being unable either to read or write. The floating masses of ice drifting from the northward, and the heavy swell from the same quarter, when off Whale Sound, would seem to indicate that Greenland is no part of America, but a large island, or rather an archipelago of islands. Baffin's Bay, as we now see it on some modern charts, is wholly supposititious.

The unabated zeal and the extraordinary perseverance which actuated the promoters of these early voyages of discovery were kept alive by the prevailing opinion that the north-west passage had actually been made by the Spaniards and Portugueze,* and particularly by a Greek pilot of the name of Juan de Fuca ;† but from the termination of Baffin's last voyage, if we except an obscure attempt of Hawkridge, who had accompanied Sir Thomas Button in 1612, the ardour for the discovery of this passage seems to have abated. It was, however, revived in 1630, by one Lucas Foxe, a shrewd, sensible man, who, having availed himself of the information gained by preceding adventurers, was so certain of making the passage, that he obtained a letter from Charles I. addressed to his brother the Emperor of Japan. This enterprize was, in fact, under the immediate patronage of the king, who contributed one of his own ships, fitted out in the most complete manner, and victualled for 18 months. Sir Thomas Roe and Sir John Wolstenholme were named by the king to superintend the equipment of the voyage. Some merchants of Bristol having fitted out

* Sir Humfrey Gilbert says, that one Salvaterra, a gentleman of Vittoria, in Spain, came into Ireland in 1568, and in his (Sir Gilbert's) hearing, told Sir Henry Sidney, then Lord Deputy, that one Urdaneta, a friar of Mexico, had told him eight years before, that he came from *Mar del Sur* into Germany through this north-west passage, and shewed Salvaterra a sea-card made by his own experience and travel in that voyage. This friar, Sir Gilbert adds, told the King of Portugal that he meant to publish the same, but the king most earnestly desired him not to make the same known, for that 'if England had knowledge and experience thereof, it would greatly hinder both him and the King of Spain.' This Urdaneta went with Magellan and afterwards with Legaspi's expedition, in 1564, to the Philippine Islands; and the chart, long used by the Manilla ships, was originally constructed by Urdaneta.

† His real name was Apostolos Valerianus. The story told to Mr. Michael Lok, Consul for the Turkey merchants at Aleppo, was a plain and no doubt a true one—that he was plundered in a Manilla ship, off Cape California, by one Candish, (Cavendish, who states his having found a *Greek* pilot in one of the ships he plundered,) an Englishman—that he was afterwards sent by the Viceroy of Mexico, to discover the Strait of Anian, but owing to a mutiny in the squadron, he returned—that in 1599 he was again sent on this discovery; that he entered a strait between 47° and 48° of latitude, and sailed above twenty days in a broad sea; and that, opposed by savages clothed in skins, he returned to Acapulco. The late Bishop of Salisbury, rather indiscretely, has pronounced this story of De Fuca, 'the fabric of imposture;' for the ink was scarcely dry which transmitted to posterity this hasty opinion, when the strait, and the sea, and the savages were recognized by Meares and others, in the very spot pointed out by the old Greek pilot, to whom modern geographers have rendered tardy justice, by assigning to the strait he discovered, the name of *Juan de Fuca*.

a ship

a ship for the same purpose, under the command of Captain James, requested that she might accompany Foxe. Early in May, 1631, His Majesty's ship Charles, of 80 tons, left England; but owing to foggy weather, and ice, it was the 15th July before she reached the islands of Salisbury and Nottingham. From hence Foxe stood over to the Continent of America, and made the land in 64° 10′, which he named *Sir Thomas Roe's Welcome;* and directing his course to the southward discovered *Brook Cobham,* since called *Marble Island;* after this he anchored in Nelson's River; and concluding that no passage existed between that point and 64° 10′ N., he next stood to the northward, between Southampton and Cumberland Islands, and on the west coast of the latter gave names to King Charles's promontory, Cape Maria, Trinity Islands, Lord Weston's Portland and *Foxe's Farthest,* being, as the name imports, the extreme point to which he proceeded, in latitude 66° 47′ N. Adverse winds, long nights, a waning moon, and the sickness of his crew, obliged him 'either to seek for harbour, or to freeze to death in the sea,' and he therefore returned to England.

'Captain James wintered in the cul-de-sac of Hudson's Sea, named after him *James's Bay;* came home the following year, and published a dismal account of his sufferings from cold, hunger, disease, &c. though the latitude in which he passed the winter was only 52° 3′. Without adding the slightest information to the geography of Hudson's Sea, he decides boldly that there is no such thing as a north-west passage.

About the same time one M. de Groseiller, of Canada, was dispatched from Quebec for the purpose of discovery. Landing near Nelson's River, he fell in with a wretched hut in which were six people nearly famished. They were part of the crew of a ship which had been sent from Boston, and which, while they were on shore, had been driven to sea by the ice, and was never heard of more. Groseiller went to Paris, but meeting with no encouragement from the French government, came to England with a letter from our ambassador to Prince Rupert, who received him favourably; and, being joined by other noblemen and merchants, fitted out a ship in 1668, which Captain Gillam was appointed to command. He proceeded up Davis's Strait to 75° N., returned to Rupert's River in the bottom of Hudson's Bay, and there wintered. In the mean time Charles II. by his Royal Charter, constituted Prince Rupert and certain lords, knights, and merchants, a body corporate, known by the name of 'the Governor and Company of the Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay.'

From the moment this body of 'Adventurers' was instituted, the *spirit* of adventure died away; and every succeeding effort was palsied by the baneful influence of monopoly, of which the discovery

very of a north-west passage was deemed the forerunner of destruction. Even the publication of De Fonte's* Voyage failed to rouse the attention of speculators. At length, however, in 1720, one Knight, who had long been in the Company's service as master of a ship, and subsequently governor of one of their forts, reminded his old masters that they were obliged, by their charter, to make discoveries and extend their trade, and that if they refused to indulge him with an expedition for these purposes, he would apply to the crown. Being nearly 80 years of age, the Company thought it more advisable to gratify his 'troublesome zeal,' as Robson calls it, than to let the business be taken up by some abler hand—his instructions were to find the Strait of Anian, in order to discover gold, whales, and other *valuable commodities*, to the northward, &c. Knight was so confident of success, that he caused strong chests to be made, hooped with iron, to hold the gold and copper which he was determined to find, and which seem to have engrossed his mind more than the discovery of the north-west passage. The two ships sent under him and Barlow were never heard of more; but some of their remains were discovered six or seven years afterwards in a bay on Marble Island, where their crews appear to have perished in the most miserable manner. In 1722 one Scroggs was sent to the northward ostensibly to look for these unfortunate sufferers, about which, however, Robson says, there was not one word in his instructions. This Scroggs appears to have been totally unfit for any expedition on account of his ignorance and timidity, but exceedingly well qualified to answer the purpose of the Hudson's Bay Company, who seemed to enjoy their monopoly in perfect tranquillity, without giving themselves the smallest concern about making discoveries either by land or by water.

At length a gentleman of the name of Dobbs, having well considered what preceding navigators had stated with regard to the high tides from the northward in the *Welcome*, prevailed on the Company, after much importunity, to send a vessel to the northward, in 1737, but she returned without doing any thing, never having reached so high as the latitude 63°. Dobbs, perceiving the reluctant and negligent conduct of the Company, applied next to the

* The Voyage of De Fonte, Fuenté, or Fonta, appeared for the first time in a periodical publication called the *Monthly Miscellany*, or *Memoirs for the Curious*, for April, 1708. It is supposed to have been performed in 1640. Captain Burney, who has published it at length in his 'History of Voyages, &c.' seems to think with Mr. Dalrymple, that it is an idle piece of invention by one Petiver, a contributor to the above-mentioned Miscellany; though it might have been founded on the circumstance of Burgomaster Witsen having mentioned a voyage made by *the celebrated Da Fonta* in 1649, to *Terra del Fuego*, at the cost of the King of Spain; and of the Boston ship that was lost in Hudson's Bay, six of whose crew were found on shore by Groseiller—it is something of the kind of our modern romances composed of fact and fiction, pleasant to read, but injurious to the truth of history.

government, and by his perseverance and sanguine representations obtained the Furnace bomb and the pink Discovery, to be appropriated for this service, under the orders of Captain Middleton, a commander in the British navy, who had served as master in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company for many voyages. Middleton left England in 1741, wintered in Churchill River, and in the summer of 1742 proceeded up the Welcome to Wager River, and looked into (he says sailed round) what he was pleased to call *Repulse Bay*. From hence he returned to the southward. On his arrival in England, Dobbs accused him of wilfully misrepresenting his discoveries, to curry favour with his old employers, and of having taken a bribe of 5000*l*. from them not to make any discoveries. He denies the bribe, but admits that he might have said to some of the governors that he would discover the passage and none of those with him should be the wiser for it. His officers too swore to his having misrepresented facts. The Lords of the Admiralty called upon him to answer the charges preferred against him by Mr. Dobbs, which he did at full length; but without satisfying them. To evince, on the contrary, how strongly impressed they still were with the probability of a north-west passage, their Lordships procured an act the following year (18 Geo. II.), for granting a reward of twenty thousand pounds to the person or persons who should discover a north-west passage through Hudson's Strait to the western and southern ocean of America; a discovery which the preamble states to be of 'great benefit and advantage to the trade of this kingdom.'

The offer of this reward immediately brought forward new adventurers, who raised by subscription a sum sufficient to equip two ships, the Dobbs commanded by Captain Moor, and the California by Captain Smith, which left the Thames in May, 1746. On the 11th August they reached the coast of America about Marble Island, and having made some observations on the height, direction and velocity of the tides, they stood to the southward and wintered in Port Nelson, where they were treated with great jealousy, and closely watched by the servants of the Hudson's Bay Company. They remained here, we know not why, till the 1st July, when they again proceeded to the northward, and examined Wager's Strait; here the two commanders differed respecting the examination of Repulse Bay, and the ships returned to England, without having accomplished any other discovery beyond that of ascertaining Wager Water to be a deep bay or inlet. Two accounts of this voyage were published; one, containing many curious and sensible observations, by Mr. Ellis, the other, a laboured and conceited performance in two volumes, by 'the Clerk of the California.'

After

After this the spirit of discovery in the north seems totally to have sunk; and the Hudson's Bay Company were left in that state of apathy which seems most congenial to their habits and interests. They sent, it is true, Mr. Hearne thirteen hundred miles in search of copper, and after the lapse of a hundred years they discovered that Chesterfield's Inlet at the distance of a hundred leagues from one of their establishments, was *not* the north-west passage; but they never once thought of sending any one a little farther to the north, where probably in half the distance travelled by Hearne, the sea coast would have interrupted the traveller's progress.

The government, however, was vigorously prosecuting new discoveries; and, after so many failures to the northward, it was resolved to employ the celebrated Cook to determine the exact situation of the two continents of Asia and America, or, in other words, to examine the *Strait of Anian*. On this occasion a new act was passed (16 Geo. III.) granting a reward of twenty thousand pounds to any person or persons who should discover any northern passage for vessels by sea, between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, in any direction or parallel to the northward of the fifty-second degree of northern latitude. In the same year Cook sailed from the Thames with the Resolution and Discovery. On the 9th August, 1778, he determined the western extremity of America, to which he gave the name of Cape Prince of Wales, to be in 65° 46′ N. long. 191° 45′; and, when in lat. 66° 5′, the width of the Strait which divides the two continents of Asia and America, to be about fourteen leagues. Standing to the northward he named a point of land on the American coast *Point Mulgrave*, the lat. of which was 67° 45′. He continued up the Strait till he was in lat. 70° 33′, in an open sea, but soon after, in 70° 41′, found himself 'close to the edge of the ice which was as compact as a wall,' and ten or twelve feet high. In returning to the southward he saw, on the American side, a low point in lat. 70° 29′, to which he gave the name of *Icy Cape*. As the ice was still near the ships in lat. 69° 32′ while there was none in proceeding to the northward, he concluded that the whole was a moveable mass, though he could not detect any current. To a point of high land in lat. 69° 5′, he gave the name of *Cape Lisburne*. It being now near the end of August, Captain Cook repaired to Oonalashka, and from thence to the Sandwich islands, with the intention of renewing the examination of the Strait the following year; but by his unfortunate death, that task devolved on Captain Clarke, who entered the Strait toward the end of June, 1779, on the Asiatic side. On the 6th July he had reached the lat. 67° N. and, after encountering much ice, that of 70° 33′. On the 19th, in 69° 34′, he got sight of the land on the American side to the S. E. but could not

come near it—and this, with Cape Prince of Wales, viewed from the middle of the Strait, were the only two points he saw on the coast of America: after some further attempts on the Asiatic side, he returned to Kamschatka, though the month of July had not yet expired. Without attaching blame to Captain Clarke, whose constitution was so debilitated that he died before they reached Kamschatka, or to Captains Gore or King, we think that, had Cook lived, he would not so soon have abandoned this great object. It is admitted in the narrative of the voyage, that the 'impenetrable barrier of ice' occasionally breaks up and is moved about in every direction; that 'as far as their experience went,' the sea to the north of Behring's Strait is clearer of ice in August than in July; and that 'perhaps in September it may still be more free;' it is also admitted that there is less probability of success on the Asiatic, than on the American side of the Strait; and yet it is known that Deschneff succeeded in passing the Strait from the north side of the Asiatic continent: under such admissions, it was certainly unfortunate that the attempt should so soon have been abandoned.

About the same time Lieutenant Pickersgill was sent in the armed brig Lion to examine the western parts of Baffin's bay—but the choice was unfortunate; he never once entered Baffin's bay; and Lieutenant Young, who superseded him and proceeded under similar instructions the following year, reached only the 72d degree of latitude, cruizing along the eastern instead of western side of Baffin's bay, and consequently among the ice which almost always clings to the shore. 'His talents,' as Dr. Douglas observes, 'were more adapted to contribute to the glory of a victory, as commander of a line of battle ship, than to add to geographical discoveries, by encountering mountains of ice, and exploring unknown coasts.'

The Hudson's Bay Company were again left free, for many years, from the apprehensions of a discovery of the north-west passage. Fortunately, however, for the world, it rarely happens that a generation passes away without producing men zealous for their country's weal, and the honour of science. Mr. Dalrymple, late hydrographer to the Admiralty, after carefully examining the question of the north-west passage, was decidedly of opinion that the problem was still to be solved; and conceiving with Dr. Douglas that 'the governor and committee of the Hudson's Bay Company had made amends for the narrow prejudices of their predecessors, and that no further obstruction would be thrown in the way of those who might be sent on discovery,' he prevailed on them to employ Mr. Duncan, a master in the navy, and now master attendant of his Majesty's dock-yard at Chatham, who had exhibited

bited considerable talent on a voyage to Nootka Sound, on this service. Mr. Dalrymple had long been of opinion that not only Greenland, but all the land said to have been seen by Baffin on the northern and eastern sides of the great bay bearing his name, was composed of clusters of islands, and that a passage through the '*fretum Davis*,' round the northern extremity of Cumberland island, led directly into the North Sea, from the 70° to the 71° of latitude. It is thus marked on an ancient globe, the first, we believe, ever made in this country, and now in the library of the Inner Temple, which contains all the discoveries of our early navigators; it is, in fact, the only remaining record of this kind, as charts were then rude and not in fashion. Davis himself refers to it; and Hackluit, in his edition of 1589, has celebrated this early specimen of geographical science.* On inquiring after this globe, we were told, that it had recently been new-coated, and that Mr. Arrowsmith's sketches had succeeded to the discoveries of Frobisher and Davis! We are slow to believe that the *venerable* Benchers of the Temple can have given their sanction to so barbarous and sacrilegious an act, as that of defacing this curious and valuable relic of antiquity.†

* Hackluit apologizes to the gentle reader 'for inserting into the worke, one of the best generall mappes of the world onely, untill the coming out of a very large and most exact terrestriall globe, collected and reformed, according to the newest, secretest, and latest discoveries, both Spanish, Portugall and English, composed by M. Emmerie Mollineux, of Lambeth, a rare gentleman in his profession, being therein for divers yeeres greatly supported by the purse and liberalitie of the worshipful marchant, Mr. William Sanderson.' This is the globe which the Benchers of the Temple are said to have white-washed.

† Mr. Dalrymple caused a copy to be taken of those parts of this globe relative to the present question. On this sketch, we see with pleasure, the Drogio and the Friesland of the two noble Venetians, the Zeni; we observe the latter where it always was and still is, at the southern extremity of Greenland, a little above the 60th parallel of latitude; still holding its head above water, in spite of the volcanoes and the earthquakes created by the Duc d'Almadover and Delisle, the Abbé Zurla and Sig. Amoretti, to overwhelm it in the ocean. We see no reason to disbelieve (as some affect to do) the fact stated by Nicolao Zeno of the friars of the monastery of St. Thomas warming their rooms, cooking their victuals, and watering their garden from a spring of hot water; such springs are known to exist: and what should prevent these friars in that dreadful cold region from availing themselves of an article so obviously useful and effectual? Is there any thing more extraordinary in the friars of Greenland boiling their victuals in the water of a hot spring than the party in the suite of Lord Macartney's embassy boiling the fish in the hot springs on the margin of the volcanic crater, in which they were caught, on the island of Amsterdam? The blind monk whom Dethmar Pleskins saw in the monastery of Helgafiel, in Iceland, and who was himself thrust, when young, into the convent of St. Thomas, in the very early part of the sixteenth century, long before Ramusio published the letters of the two Zeni, corroborates all that Zeno stated, adding that the walls of the monastery were built of pumice-stone. There is one simple fact mentioned by Nicolao Zeno which no man in the fourteenth century could know or imagine who had not lived among the Eskimaux—their bouts, he says, were framed of the bones of fishes and covered with their skins; and they were shaped *like a weaver's shuttle*—a description so just and a resemblance so perfect, that from that time to this, it has been adopted by every succeeding voyager.

Never was man more sanguine of success in any undertaking than Mr. Duncan. In 1790 he went out in the Company's ship Sea-horse, to take the command of a sloop in Hudson's Bay, called the Churchill. He found, on his arrival, a crew who affected to be terrified at the idea of going on discovery; the Company's servants told him the vessel was totally unfit for such a purpose, and that she could not be made sea-worthy in that country; though Mr. Duncan says he has since learned that she had been constantly employed for *twenty years* afterwards. Seeing nothing to be done there he immediately returned to England, resolving to have no further concern with the Hudson's Bay Company—but the governors expressed so much regret and disappointment, and Mr. Dalrymple was so urgent for following up the discovery, that he consented to take the command of a strong well-built ship of eighty-four tons, called the Beaver, fitted to his mind, and stored for eighteen months. He left the Thames on the 2d May, 1791, but did not reach the height of Charles's Island in 63° lat. till the 2d August, nor Churchill River till the 5th September, when all hope of accomplishing any thing that year was at an end. It is remarkable that our early adventurers, at a time when the art of navigation was in its infancy, the science but little understood, the instruments few and imperfect, in barks of twenty-five or thirty tons burthen, ill-constructed, ill-found and apparently ill-suited to brave the mountains of ice through which they had to force their way, and the dark and dismal storms which beset them—that these men should have succeeded in running through the straits to high latitudes and home again in less time than Mr. Duncan required to reach one of the Hudson's Bay Company's establishments, the route to which was then as well known as that to the Shetland islands.

Mr. Duncan remained in Churchill River till the 15th July in the following year, got into Chesterfield Inlet and returned to Churchill about the end of August; his crew having mutinied, encouraged, as he states, by his first officer, who was a servant of the Company. —Here grief and vexation so preyed on his mind as to render a voyage which promised every thing, completely abortive:—thus terminated the last and the least efficient of all the expeditions (excepting that of Gibbons) for the discovery of the North-west Passage!

All these failures, however, are by no means conclusive against its existence. We must bear in mind that not one of the adventurers proceeded, on the eastern side of America, beyond the Arctic circle; and that on the western side, or Strait of Behring, three points of land only to the northward of Cape Prince of Wales have been seen at a distance, the northernmost (Icy Cape) in lat. 70° 29′; the next, (Cape Lisburne,) in 69° 5′, and the third (Cape Mulgrave)

Mulgrave) in 67° 45′. Could we only be certain then that Hearne and Mackenzie actually arrived at the shore of the northern ocean,* as

* Hearne talks of the tide being out, ' but that it flowed, by the marks on the edge of the ice, twelve or fourteen feet,' and that ' it only reached a little way within the river's mouth ;' that ' the water at the mouth of the river was *perfectly fresh* when the tide was out, but it was the sea or some branch of it, by the quantity of whale-bone and seal skins which the Esquimaux had at their tents, and also by the number of seals which appeared on the ice.' If the tide was *out* on the morning of the 17th it was *in* on the middle of that day, and he never quitted the margin of the river till the morning of the 18th : why then judge of its rise by ' the marks on the ice ?' The tide rises *fourteen* feet in the Thames as high as Woolwich, and is *salt* at low water at Gravesend ; how fourteen feet of sea water could leave that of the river ' perfectly fresh' close within the bar, is difficult to comprehend. As to his latitude of this spot, that is still less to be depended on ; he tells us that ' in those high latitudes and at this season of the year the sun is always at a good height above the horizon, so that he had not only day-light, but sun-shine the whole night.' Now there is not a word of this ' sun-shine all night,' in his M.S. Journal, as quoted by Doctor Douglas ; and indeed, he says in his printed book, that a thick fog and drizzling rain came on, and ' finding that neither the river nor the sea were likely to be of any use, I did not think it worth while to wait for fair weather to determine the latitude exactly by an observation.' What did he go for ? he was selected for the journey *because* he could take an observation for the latitude, and yet in the whole of the journey of thirteen hundred miles and back again, he takes but *one* single observation ! But the latitude of the river's mouth, he says, may be depended on—what that latitude was, however, is never once mentioned ; but by the chart it is about 73° 30′.—The result of his single observation at Congecathawhachaga was 68° 46′ and the courses and distances from that place to the mouth of the river give a difference of about 3°, so that the latitude we are to ' depend upon,' instead of 73° 30′ as on the chart, is, by his reckoning, 71° 46′. Doctor Douglas states it from his Journal at 72°.—Dalrymple, however, and Arrowsmith, and all the chart-makers, have agreed to cut him down to about 69°, and if so, the sun was not *always a good height* above the horizon, for its declination being on the 18th July about 20°, he must have been, on that midnight, *in* the horizon.

Mackenzie's account is not more satisfactory. On his arrival among the *Quarrellers*, in latitude 68°, he was informed that the distance from thence to the sea, on the east side of the river, was not far, and on the west that it was still shorter ; that the land on both sides projected to a point in the direction of the river, to which point he was proceeding,—at six miles beyond the Quarrellers, the river branched into a multitude of channels, separated by low islands, and banks of mud and sand. He took the mid-channel, which was to carry him to *Benahulla Toe*, or white man's lake, into which he entered in latitude 69° 1′ N. This *lake* was quite open to the westward, and out of the channel of the river had only four feet, and in some places, one foot of depth ; he reached, however, an island to the westward. From the whole tenor of his statement, we certainly concluded that this was the *sea*, but are presently informed that his people could not refrain from expressions of real concern that they were obliged to return *without reaching the sea*. In the course of the night, they were disturbed by the *rising of the water* ; they also saw *whales*, but they were *white* ; the guide, however, assured him they were the same that constituted the principal food of the Esquimaux ; ' the tide appeared to rise sixteen or eighteen *inches* ;' he saw no natives, but found many of their huts, their domestic utensils, frames of sledges and of canoes made of whale-bone, which left no doubt on his mind that they were the deserted abodes of the Esquimaux. The latitude of Whale-island was 69° 14′ N.—and with this slight and imperfect information, he returns from a long and painful journey, either not knowing or not chusing to say, whether he had been on the shore of the hyperborean sea or not ; but evidently wishing it to be inferred, as the title of his book implies, and his chart asserts, that he had reached the ' frozen ocean.' Yet for some incomprehensible reason, he avoids even mentioning the *name* of the *sea*, but talks of a *tide*—a tide of sixteen or eighteen inches ! The simple, easy and obvious test of dipping his finger in the water to taste if it was *salt*, seems not to have occurred to him—

as the titles of their books and all the charts assert, the existence of a passage would amount nearly to a certainty. The distance between Baffin's Sea and Behring's Strait is not more than 1,200 miles, of which that between the mouths of the Mackenzie and Copper-mine rivers is about 400. On the charts the mouths of these rivers are nearly on the same parallel of latitude, i. e. about 69½°. Now there can be but little doubt that the two continents of America and Asia have once been united, the trending of the coast of the latter continuing on the opposite side of Behring's Strait for more than 1000 miles nearly in the same line. On the American side, no land has been seen to the northward of the Icy Cape, and none between it and Cape Lisburne; Icy Cape is very low land, the Russians, whose regular establishments on the American continent extend as far north as 67° north lat. say that it is an island; and so strong is the impression at Petersburgh of a practicable passage from the Pacific to the Atlantic, round the northern coast of America, that Count Romanzoff, at his own expense, has fitted out a stout vessel called the Rurick, commanded by Lieut. Kotzebue, son of the celebrated writer of that name, to make the attempt. She passed Plymouth last summer, where she was supplied with a life-boat, and during the summer of the present year, she is to endeavour to penetrate into the northern sea between Icy Cape and Cape Lisburne, or, on meeting with any impediment, to proceed round the former: it will be a singular event if the last, and we may almost say least of the maritime powers of Europe, should be the first to make this important discovery—so often attempted before she had a single ship on the ocean.

Thus then the coast of America may be presumed to preserve a line from Behring's Strait to Mackenzie's River, and from thence to Copper-mine River, a distance of 800 miles, fluctuating between the parallels of 69° and 70°, and we see not the slightest reason to question its continuance, in or near that line, for the remaining 400 miles to Baffin's Sea, or to the strait which connects it with Hudson's Sea: this is the only point to be discovered.—No human being has yet approached the coast of America, on the eastern side, from 66½° to 72°. Davies, Baffin, and Foxe came nearest to it; but the attempts of the rest were chiefly confined to the southward. Middleton was in the way of making discoveries, if, instead of losing his time in Wager River, he had continued to coast to the northward.

The solution of this important problem is the business of *three months* out and home. The space to be examined, at the very

if he did so, he is uncandid in not mentioning the result—if he did not, he is woefully deficient in that sagacity which has always been accounted a prominent feature in the character of a North-Briton. Under all the circumstances mentioned by these two travellers, we may perhaps conclude that both were *near* the sea-shore, but neither of them reached it.

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utmost, is from the 67th to the 71st parallels, or four degrees of latitude.

Two small schooners of 80 or 100 tons, under the command of a skilful Naval Officer, with a couple of Greenland fishermen to act as pilots through the ice, would be sufficient for the purpose. They should proceed at once up the very middle of Davis's Strait, keeping to the westward so as not to raise their latitude higher than 72°, and having cleared Cumberland Island, edge away to the southward. Hitherto most of our adventurers have worked their way through Hudson's Strait, which is generally choked up with ice; then standing to the northward they have had to contend with ice drifting to the southward, with contrary winds and currents; these inconveniences would be obviated by standing first to the latitudes of 71° or 72° and from thence southerly and westerly till they either reached Hudson's Bay, which would decide the question in the negative, or till they saw the north coast of America, which would go far to complete the discovery.

Disappointment is generally fertile in apologies for failures; we need not therefore be surprized if we find some assert that no such passage exists, and others pronounce its inutility if it should be discovered, from the uncertainty of its being free from ice any one year, and perhaps practicable only once in three or four years. Such an apology for our present ignorance of every thing that regards the geography, the hydrography, and meteorology of the north-eastern shores of America, might be pleaded by mercantile speculators, but can have little weight with those who have the interests of science at heart, or the national honour and fame, which are intimately connected with those interests. When the government offered a reward of £20,000 for the discovery of the North-west Passage, and £5000 to him who should approach within one degree of the North Pole, it was not with a view to any immediate commercial advantages that this liberal encouragement was held out, but with the same expanded object that sent Cook in search of a 'Southern Continent.' If, however, the continent of America shall be found to terminate, as is most likely, about the 70th degree of latitude, or even below it, we have little doubt of a free and practicable passage round it for seven or eight months in every year; and we are much mistaken if the North-west Company would not derive immediate and incalculable advantages from a passage of three months to their establishment in Columbia River, instead of the circuitous voyage of six or seven months round Cape Horn; to say nothing of the benefit which might be derived from taking in their cargoes of furs and peltry for the China market at the mouths of Mackenzie and Copper-mine rivers, to which the northern Indians would be too happy to bring them, if protected by

by European establishments, at these or other places, from their enemies the Esquimaux.

The polar regions of the globe within the arctic circle offer a wide field for the researches of a philosophic mind; yet, in point of science, very little is known beyond what is contained in the account of Captain Phipps's voyage to the neighbourhood of Spitzbergen. The natural history, though the best, is still but imperfectly known; the sea and land swarm with animals in these abodes of ice and snow, and multitudes of both yet remain to be discovered and described. It is an important object to obtain more accurate observations on those huge mountains of ice which float on the sea; it is no longer a question that the *field* or *flaked* ice is frozen sea-water, though itself perfectly fresh; and it is almost as certain, though doubted by some, that the huge masses which the Dutch call *icebergs*, are formed on the steep and precipitous shores, from whence those 'thunderbolts of snow' are occasionally hurled into the deep, bearing with them fragments of earth and stones. 'I came,' says Foxe, 'by one piece of ice higher than the rest, whereupon a stone was of the contents of five or six tonne weight, with divers other smaller stones and mud thereon.'

It is a common but we believe an erroneous opinion, that the temperature of our climate has regularly been diminishing, and that it is owing to the ice having permanently fixed itself to the shores of Greenland, which, in consequence, from being once a flourishing colony of Denmark, is now become uninhabitable and unapproachable. We doubt both the fact and the inference. It is not the climate that has altered, but we who feel it more severe as we advance in years; the registers of the absolute degree of temperature, as measured by the thermometer, do not warrant any such conclusion; and more attempts than one to land on the coast of Greenland must be made, before we can give credit to its being bound up in eternal ice—which is known to shift about with every gale of wind—to be drifted by currents—and to crumble and consume below the surface of the water. We suspect indeed, that the summer heat, which in the latitude 80½° Phipps found to be on the average of the month of July at 42° of Fahrenheit, during the whole twenty-four hours, and once, when exposed to the sun, as high as 86½°, dissolves fully as much of the ice and snow on the surface of the sea as the preceding winter may have formed.* It appears too, that

* In the Transactions of the Wernerian Society are published several Meteorological Journals of Mr. Scoresby, a whale-fisher of Hull, which, compared with that of Phipps, would seem to sanction the idea of a decreasing temperature, the average height of the thermometer, in the months of July in 1811 and 1812, being only about 33°, and very often below the freezing point, though in a lower latitude by three degrees than that in which Captain Phipps observed it; but the fishing vessels penetrate the fields of ice, the open spaces of which are frequented by whales; and there can be no doubt this diminished temperature is owing to their being in the midst of an atmosphere chilled by the surrounding ice.

there

there are times in the depth of winter when the temperature is exceedingly mild; and the intense frosts are undoubtedly moderated by the caloric given out from the Aurora borealis, which in these regions affords not only an admirable compensation for the short absence of the moon, but imparts a considerable degree of warmth to the lower regions of the atmosphere, filling the whole circle of the horizon, and approaching so near the surface of the globe as to be distinctly *heard* in varying their colours and positions. 'I have frequently,' says Hearne, 'heard them making a rustling and crackling noise, like the waving of a large flag in a fresh gale of wind.' The electric *aura*, it is well known, will raise the mercury in the tube of the thermometer, but no experiments have been made to ascertain the degree of heat given out by these *henbanes* or *petty dancers*, as Foxe calls them, which must be very considerable; as Button says, 'the stream in the element is like the flame that cometh forth from the mouth of a hot oven.' Almost every voyager into Hudson's and Baffin's seas complains of the occasional hot weather, and the great annoyance of mosquitoes on the shores. Duncan, when surrounded with ice, had the thermometer in August at 56° in the shade, and 82° in the sun. Yet the cold in winter is more intense than they have yet been able to measure either by a mercurial or spirit thermometer. It is a well established fact, that on the eastern sides of great continents, the temperature is greatly below that in the same degree of latitude on the western sides: thus, while the whole of Hudson's Bay, the coast of Labrador and Newfoundland, down to 46° may be said to be, in winter, one mass of ice, not a particle of ice was ever seen in the sea on the western side of America, to the southward of 64° or 65°. The delicate humming-bird is not uncommon at Nootka, and was seen by Mackenzie at Peace River, in latitude 54° 24'. The cold of Halifax, in latitude 44° 40', is much more intense than that of London in 51½°. Pekin, in less than latitude 40°, has generally a constant frost for three months every year; and ice, the thickness of a dollar, is not uncommon at Canton, under the tropics. On the coast of Jesso, in latitude 45° 24', Captain Krusenstern found the ground covered with snow in the middle of May, and vegetation more backward than at Archangel, in latitude 64½°, in the middle of April.

Some of our old navigators ascribed the great variation and irregularity of the magnetic needle in Hudson and Baffin's Seas, to the effects of cold;* and others to the attraction of particular

* Foxe observed that the needle near Nottingham Island had lost its powers, which, among other things, he ascribed to the cold air interposed between the needle and the point of its attraction. Ellis conceived the cold to be the cause of the irregular action of the needle, and he says, that the compasses on being brought into a warm place recovered their action and proper direction.

islands.

islands. In the northern regions, near Spitzbergen, Phipps observed nothing remarkable in the variation of the needle, but Baffin found it at 5 points, or 56°, 'a thing almost incredible, and almost matchless in all the world besides.' Duncan supposed the needle to be attracted by Charles's Island, as the variation amounted to 63° 51′, nearly 6 points; and on the same parallel, when the island was out of sight, only 45° 22′; and he states, that when near Merry and Jones's Islands, in a violent storm of thunder, lightning and heavy rain, the night being very dark and dismal, all the compasses in the ship were running round, and so unsteady, that they could not trust one moment to the course they were steering.

Many other meteorological phenomena peculiar to these regions afford curious matter for investigation; but our geographical knowledge of every part of Hudson's and Baffin's seas is most defective. We need only cast an eye over the different charts made by Arrowsmith, from 1793 to 1811, no two of which are alike—large islands being inserted in some and omitted in others—the north-eastern side of the continent is, in one, cut into islands—in another, islands are joined to the continent—here a strait is filled up—there another opened—in short—

> 'Vidi ego quod fuerat quondam solidissima tellus
> Esse fretum. Vidi factas ex æquore terras'—

These flourishes *ad libitum* (for not one iota of additional information of the northern parts has been received for the last sixty years) are not very commendable, in a geographical point of view; and in the absence of all knowledge, we should deem it preferable to leave *blank* (as Purdey has left Baffin's Sea in his General Chart) those coasts and islands which fancy only has created.